

Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition

By

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ABSTRACT

This study argues that there are certain features of Hegel's thought which cannot be explained in terms of his involvement with "mainstream philosophy." These features include Hegel's claim that he has achieved wisdom, as well as his theory that God develops over time, becoming progressively more "concrete," finally reaching "completion" through the philosopher. These features, and others, are intelligible in light of the influence of the Hermetic tradition, a body of thought with roots in Greco-Roman Egypt. In the modern period, the Hermetic tradition becomes inextricably connected with mystical currents of thought such as Kabbalism, alchemy, millenarianism, Rosicrucianism, and theosophy. I argue for this influence through an analysis of Hegel's texts, lectures, fragments, and correspondence. There are four major periods of Hermetic influence or interest in Hegel's life. When Hegel was a boy, Württemberg was a major center of Hermeticism with much of the pietist movement influenced by the Christian Kabbalist thought of Jakob Böhme and Rosicrucianism. I show how the leading Swabian exponents of speculative (or "mystical") pietism, J.A. Bengel and F.C. Oetinger, strongly influenced Hegel. One of Hegel's biographers called his years as a private tutor (1793-1801) a "theosophical phase," during which time Hegel became conversant with the works of a number of mystics and Hermeticists. In Jena (1801-07), Hegel lectured at length, and approvingly, on Böhme and Bruno, and drew freely from the alchemical tradition. His notes employed Hermetic language and symbolism. Finally, in Berlin (1818-1831) Hegel developed a friendship with Franz von Baader, the premiere occultist and mystic of the day. The bulk of this study is an analysis of the major parts of Hegel's philosophy in terms of their Hermetic influences or elements. These include a Masonic subtext of "initiation mysticism" in the Phenomenology of Spirit; a Böhmean subtext to the Phenomenology's Preface; a Kabbalistic-Böhmean-Lullian influence on the Logic; alchemical-Paracelsian elements in the Philosophy of Nature; occult elements in the Philosophy of Spirit; an influence of Joachimite and pietist apocalypticism on Hegel's doctrine of Objective Spirit and theory of world history; and alchemical and Rosicrucian images in the Philosophy of Right.

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G.A.M

Atlanta,
August 31, 1997

ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

Butler = Hegel: The Letters, trans. Clark Butler and Christianne Seiler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

EL = Encyclopedia Logic. (Reference is by Hegel's paragraph number; e.g., "EL § 9.")

Geraets = The Encyclopedia Logic, trans. T.F. Geraets, et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

Hoffmeister = Johannes Hoffmeister, Briefe von und an Hegel, 4 vols. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1952-81). (Hoffmeister numbers the letters, and I shall refer to these numbers; e.g., "Hoffmeister #15").

Knox = Philosophy of Right, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952).

LHP = Lectures on the History of Philosophy, 3 vols., trans. E.S. Haldane (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1892).

LPR = Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, 3 vols., ed. and trans. Peter C. Hodgson, et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

Miller = The Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). Reference is by Miller's page number, not paragraph number (the paragraph numbers in Miller do not exist in Hegel's original and are there simply to provide quick reference to J.N. Findlay's commentary, which forms an appendix to the translation).

or . . .

The Science of Logic, trans. A.V. Miller (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969).

The context makes it clear which is being referred to.

Nisbet = Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

Petry = Hegel's Philosophy of Nature, 3 vols., trans. M.J. Petry (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970).

or . . .

Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit, 3 vols.,
trans. M.J. Petry (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1978).

The context makes it clear which is being referred to.

PG = Phänomenologie des Geistes, hrsg. v. Hans-Friedrich
Wessels und Heinrich Clairmont (Hamburg: Felix Meiner,
1988).

PN = Philosophy of Nature. (Reference is by Hegel's
paragraph number; e.g., "PN § 246.")

PR = Philosophy of Right. (Reference is by Hegel's
paragraph number.)

PS = Philosophy of Spirit. (Reference is by Hegel's
paragraph number.)

VIG = Die Vernunft in der Geschichte, hrsg. v. Johannes
Hoffmeister (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1966).

VPR = Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion, 3
Bde., hrsg. v. Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Felix Meiner,
1983-7).

Wallace = Hegel's Philosophy of Mind, trans. William
Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

Werke = G.W.F. Hegel: Werke, 20 Bde., hrsg. v. Eva
Moldenhauer und Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main:
Suhrkamp, 1986).

WL = Wissenschaft der Logik, 3 Bde., hrsg. v. Hans-Jürgen
Gawoll (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1986-92). This
includes the 1812 edition of Das Sein, but unless
otherwise noted, reference to "WL I" is always to the
1832 edition of Das Sein, hrsg. v. Hans-Jürgen Gawoll
(Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1990).

Z = Zusatz

Unless otherwise noted, reference is by page number.

When referring to specific texts by Hegel, such as the
Philosophy of Nature, I have underlined their titles. I
have not underlined the names of the individual Hegelian
sciences when they are mentioned; e.g., "Hegel believes
that a Philosophy of Nature is necessary . . . " or "Logic
is the first part of Hegel's system."

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21. The Three Ages of Joachim de Fiore. From his Book of Figures (12th century).

PART I

THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICESHIP

INTRODUCTION

1. The Uniqueness of Hegel's Project; Hermeticism Defined

Hegel is not a philosopher. He is no lover or seeker of wisdom; he believes he has achieved it. Hegel writes in the Preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit, "To help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science, to the goal where it can lay aside the title of 'love of knowing' and be actual knowledge--that is what I have set before me" (Miller, 3; PG, 3).

Hegel's claim is unique: there is no precedent for it in the philosophic tradition. It is completely contrary, for instance, to the spirit of Greek philosophy. Plato's aporetic dialogues attempt to show the futility of the quest for "Absolute Knowledge." Socrates denies that he has knowledge of things divine. In the Phaedo he tells us that the attempt to know such things directly leads to blindness, and that we must therefore take a second-best route, investigating them only as they show up in human speech. Aristotle's thought, contrary to what superficial histories of science relate, is far too empirical and anti-a prioristic to hold out the hope of a "completion" of knowledge.

The closest analogue to the Hegelian position among the Greeks--and, indeed, in the tradition as a whole--would

be the Stoics, who believed that wisdom was possible. However, their wise man was not a man of complete knowledge, but of complete self-satisfaction.¹ Plotinus holds out the hope of momentary ecstatic union with the One through mystical experience, but not a permanent transformation of the philosopher, and certainly not one built on a discursive knowledge of the Whole. The Christian tradition, as exemplified by Augustine and Aquinas, is, of course, hostile to the idea of achieved wisdom, as it seems to imply--quite rightly, as we shall see--a divinization of man. Descartes and the modern scientific rationalists lay out a project for the reconstruction and expansion of our knowledge on sure foundations, but are almost completely concerned with scientific or empirical questions and thus not with wisdom, the object of philosophy. Spinoza, with whom Hegel is often compared, identifies God with Nature, thus seeming to indicate the possibility of achieving, through science, the wisdom of God--but he makes the "modes" of God infinite, and thus the task infinite as well. Leibniz believes that the philosopher sits at the feet of God, but he makes divine knowledge equivalent to the ability to deduce every characteristic of every existent, a type of knowledge obviously unattainable to man. Kant is the philosopher of

1. This point is made by Alexandre Kojève in Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 76-77.

finitude par excellence. He denies any answers to fundamental questions about the world, the soul and God, and--in a manner oddly similar to Plotinus--claims that we can know the noumenal beyond only in "flashes" of the experience of the sublime. Fichte, despite his apparent denial of the thing-in-itself, holds that the elimination of the subject-object distinction (which, for Hegel, is entailed by the achievement of wisdom) is an infinite task.

Although Hegel's claim to have attained wisdom and to have transcended philosophy is unprecedented in the philosophic tradition, it is not altogether without precedent, for the claim to have actually achieved wisdom is a commonplace among the exponents of the Hermetic tradition, a current of thought which derives its name from the so-called Hermetica (or Corpus Hermeticum), a collection of Greek and Latin treatises and dialogues written in the first or second centuries A.D., although the ideas they contain are probably far older. The legendary author of these works is Hermes Trismegistus ("Thrice-Greatest Hermes"). Hermeticism is also sometimes called theosophy, or esotericism; less accurately, it is often characterized as mysticism, or occultism. The Hermetica are not, properly speaking, philosophical works. They contain no arguments to speak of, and are not presented as part of an ongoing "search for wisdom." Rather, they claim to present a final, authoritative wisdom, achieved in full.

I am not the first person to suggest that Hegel should be understood as a "Hermetic" thinker. Eric Voegelin, in his essay "Response to Professor Altizer's 'A New History and a New but Ancient God,'" writes that "For a long time I studiously avoided any serious criticism of Hegel in my published work, because I simply could not understand him." The turning point came with Voegelin's study of gnosticism, and the discovery that "by his contemporaries Hegel was considered a gnostic thinker." Voegelin goes on to claim that Hegel's thought "belongs to the continuous history of modern Hermeticism since the fifteenth century."²

Elsewhere, Voegelin treats Hegel as a "sorcerer." He refers to the Phenomenology of Spirit as a "grimoire" which "must be recognized as a work of magic--indeed, it is one of the great magic performances."³ To be sure, there is more than a bit of irony in Voegelin's treatment of Hegel, which is highly critical. Nevertheless, Voegelin makes it clear that he is seriously proposing that Hegel's thought be understood as a kind of "high magic."

If Voegelin were simply claiming that there is an analogue between certain ideas in Hegel's thought and

2. Eric Voegelin, "Response to Professor Altizer's 'A New History and a New but Ancient God'" in The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Vol. 12: Published Essays, 1966-1985, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 297.

3. Eric Voegelin, "On Hegel: A Study in Sorcery," in Collected Works, Vol. 12, 222; Voegelin, Science, Politics, and Gnosticism (Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 1968), 68-69.

Hermeticism, his point would be interesting but it would probably not change how scholars understand Hegel's philosophical project. Voegelin believes, however, that Hegel was directly and indirectly influenced by Hermetic thought, and that he was consciously appropriating and transforming Hermetic categories in his system. This is a much more dramatic thesis. Unfortunately, Voegelin does not pursue his "hunch"; he never wrote an account of how Hegel was influenced by Hermeticism: what Hermetic sources he had access to, which of his ideas definitely originated with Hermetic authors, how much of his technical terminology might be Hermetic in origin, etc. The present work attempts to make good on Voegelin's claim, to provide the proof he never produced himself. I will be arguing not only that there is a striking correspondence between Hegelian and Hermetic wisdom, but also that Hegel was actively interested in Hermeticism, was influenced by its exponents from boyhood on, and allied himself with Hermetic movements and thinkers throughout his life.

So far I have been deliberately vague about exactly what constitutes "Hermeticism." I shall now make a first attempt at defining it, as well as certain related concepts. (In truth, this entire Introduction is devoted to explaining what Hermeticism consists in.) Antoine Faivre, one of the world's leading authorities on esoteric philosophies, distinguishes between "Hermetism" and

"Hermeticism," and I shall follow him in this. "Hermetism" denotes the teachings and texts associated with Hermes Trismegistus: the Corpus Hermeticum, as well as later works attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, which claim to expound upon "the philosophy of Hermes." "Hermeticism" denotes a broader current of thought which grew out of Hermetism and was expanded and developed through the infusion of various other traditions or philosophies. Thus, alchemy, Kabbalism, Lullism, and the mysticism of Eckhart and Cusa--to name just a few examples--became intertwined with Hermetism. (Indeed, "Hermeticism" is used by some authors simply to mean alchemy.⁴)

Ernest Lee Tuveson in his The Avatars of Thrice Greatest Hermes: An Approach to Romanticism has made an interesting attempt to encapsulate the nature of Hermeticism. Tuveson holds that Hermeticism constitutes a middle position between pantheism and the Judeo-Christian conception of God. According to traditional Judeo-Christian thought, God is utterly transcendent and infinitely greater than man. Further, God did not have to create a world and would have lost nothing if he had not created it. Because it makes the act of creation essentially gratuitous and unmotivated, this doctrine has proved dissatisfying and even disturbing to many. Pantheism, by contrast, so thoroughly involves the divine

4. Antoine Faivre, Access to Western Esotericism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 35.

in the world that everything becomes God, even mud, hair and dirt--which drains the divine of its exaltedness and sublimity. Thus, pantheism is equally dissatisfying.

Hermeticism is a middle position between these two because it holds that the world as a whole is a moment or aspect of God's being; God is metaphysically or spiritually distinct from the world, but part of His being manifests itself as creation. Thus, our world is intimately bound up with God, yet God is still distinct from the world. Tuveson's analysis is exactly right, as will become apparent when I discuss the central ideas of the Corpus Hermeticum and of the Hermetic tradition as a whole. In the latter part of this Introduction I will explore some of the other major tenets of Hermeticism. Tuveson has, however, identified perhaps its central feature, the insistence on the involvement of the world in God's being. This will certainly emerge as one of the key correspondences between Hegel's thought and Hermeticism.

Hermeticism is difficult to define rigorously; its various strands are held together merely by a family resemblance. "Hermeticists"--men like Marsilio Ficino, or Cornelius Agrippa, or John Dee, or Robert Fludd--typically believed that there was an identity between the thought of Plato, Moses, Hermes, the Kabbalists, and others. It is very difficult to follow them in this, so it must simply be accepted that their philosophy was a conglomeration of

ideas from these and other sources. It is this oddly structured conglomeration that constitutes the "Hermetic tradition."⁵ The nature of the tradition can thus only be understood through its history, of which I will give an overview in the last two sections of this Introduction.

As I have said, Hermeticism is often classed as a type of mysticism. Gershom Scholem in his Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism has identified mysticism as the third stage in a perennial religious dialectic. At first, mankind experiences the world itself as "full of gods." This is the "mythic age," in which man experiences the divine daily and directly. In the second stage, religion appears on the scene and destroys the "dream harmony" between man and the divine: rules are introduced for "worship," intermediaries (priests) are introduced between man and God, etc. Thus, duality is created. The conception of God as absolutely transcendent and infinite is the ultimate consequence of the coming into being of "religious thought." In the third stage, the "romantic period" of religion, certain individuals desire so strongly to bridge the duality between the human and the divine that

5. This can be illustrated through the title of a book published in the late seventeenth century by the theologian Ehregott Daniel Colberg: Das Platonisch-Hermetisches Christenthum, begreifend Die Historische Erzählung vom Ursprung und vielerley Secten der heutigen Fantastischen Theologie, unterm Namen der Paracelsisten, Weigelianer, Rosencreutzer, Quaecker, Böhmisten, Wiedertäufer, Bourignisten, Labadisten und Quietisten (2 vols., Frankfurt-Leipzig, 1690/1691).

they develop systems of thought which go beyond the established scriptures and traditions, asserting either an identity between man and God, or the possibility of direct experience of God. This is the stage of mysticism, and it is often accompanied by a nostalgic yearning for the lost mythos of the first age.

Scholem has in mind, of course, the development of Kabbalism out of orthodox Judaism, but there are many other examples as well: the development of the teaching of the Indian Upanishads out of the Vedas, the development of Eckhart's mysticism out of Catholicism, the development of Böhme's thought out of Lutheranism, etc. Along these lines, we can clearly see that Hermeticism as Tuveson understands it can be classified as a form of mysticism. The only trouble with this is that mysticism generally involves mystery: some element of hiddenness or unknowing, some ineffable truth. This is why mysticism often emphasizes an experience of God, rather than a knowledge of God; typically, mystics are sceptics about human understanding or human reason.

Hermeticism, however, is a form of gnosticism: it emphasizes return to or unification with God through knowledge; it holds that we can use reason to penetrate the "mystery" of the divine.⁶ Thus, Hermeticism may be

6. Festugière in his La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste (Paris, 1944-54) argues that Hermeticism is an "optimistic" version of gnosticism. The point is repeated by Eric Voegelin in "Response to Professor Altizer," 297. Klaus

understood as "mystical" only so long as we understand that Hermeticists believe the mystery to have been removed (in just the same way we call Hegel a "philosopher," even though he believes that he has consummated the love of wisdom and now lives with it in comfortable domesticity).

Hermeticism is much more accurately termed theosophy. This word has a long history, stretching from some early Church Fathers, writing in both Greek and Latin, who used it to mean "theology," all the way to Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in the nineteenth century, founder of the Theosophical Society. Theosophy means "wisdom of God." A "theosophy" is a philosophy which claims either to have achieved definite knowledge of God's nature, or to have understood and catalogued "God's thoughts," or both. Esotericism is an umbrella term for "hidden" or "secret" traditions which counterpose themselves to public, or exoteric, religions or systems of thought. For example, the Upanishads convey esoteric Hinduism; the Kabbalah is esoteric Judaism, etc. It is commonly believed that these esoteric traditions are all one; that there is an identity between Eastern and Western esotericism, Jewish and Christian esotericism, etc. This belief often involves the assertion that there is one perennial philosophy

Vondung describes Hermeticism as a "positive gnosis." See Vondung, "Millenarianism, Hermeticism, and the Search for a Universal Science," in Science, Pseudo-Science, and Utopianism in Early Modern Thought, ed. Stephen McKnight (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 132.

manifesting itself to various degrees, or under different guises, in all traditions.⁷ In fact, the belief in the identity of esoteric traditions, and in the philosophia perennis is a key tenet of Hermeticism. Hermeticism itself may thus be termed esotericism; its adherents believe themselves to be the guardians of the esoteric philosophy of man. Antoine Faivre divides modern, western esotericism into four parts: Christian Kabbalism, Hermeticism (by which he means mainly alchemy), Paracelsian and Romantic philosophies of nature, and secret societies such as the Freemasons, Rosicrucians, and others. This description of esotericism is more or less identical to what I mean by the "Hermetic tradition."⁸

Occultism, finally, is often used as a synonym for Hermeticism. This is a half-truth, but an important one. "Occult" means "hidden." "Occultism" thus pertains to hidden forces or powers which are alleged to produce effects in the world contrary to what one would expect from

7. Agostino Steuco in his book De perenni Philosophia presented an account of intellectual history as it was seen in the Renaissance, an account in which Hermes Trismegistus figures prominently. See Copenhaver, xlix. The basic Renaissance list of "sages" went as follows: Enoch, Abraham, Noah, Zoroaster, Moses, Hermes Trismegistus, the Brahmins, the Druids, David, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato, and the Sibyls. Roger Bacon developed his own philosophical genealogy, in which Hermes was one of the figures who caused a decline in knowledge, later rectified by Aristotle.

8. My position is basically identical to that of David Walsh in his The Mysticism of Innerwordly Fulfillment: A Study of Jacob Boehme (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1983), 3-4; Vondung, 131-132.

the "laws" of physics. "Occultism" involves the "supernatural": magic, witchcraft, psychic phenomena, astrology, spiritualism, etc. The metaphysics, cosmology, and epistemology of Hermeticism provide a kind of theoretical "framework" which makes supernatural or paranormal phenomena intelligible. For instance, as I shall discuss in more detail shortly, certain "theoretical" or "philosophical" texts in the Corpus Hermeticum provide the basis for the "technical" or "practical" Hermetic writings, which involve alchemy and theurgy. (In Chapter Six I shall discuss how Hegel's system provides exactly the same framework for making the supernatural intelligible, and that Hegel was well aware of this.) Thus, while Hermeticism is not itself occultism, it often leads to occultism or is closely associated with it.

2. Scholarship on the Hermetic Tradition; Hegel's Hermeticism

For many years, scholars ignored the influence of the Hermetic tradition, particularly on such "mainstream" thinkers as, for example, Leibniz and Newton, treating it as an embarrassment. In recent years, however, the work of several pioneering authors has made it clear that this was a major lacuna in the scholarship on modern thought. Foremost among these authors is Frances A. Yates, whose many works include Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic

Tradition (1964), The Art of Memory (1966), The Rosicrucian Enlightenment (1972), and The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age (1979).⁹ Others who must be mentioned include P.O. Kristeller, who worked to demonstrate the influence of Ficino's translation of the Corpus Hermeticum on Renaissance thought (see his The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino, 1943). D.P. Walker's important book Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella (1958) also deals with the "magical" tradition in the Renaissance. Allen G. Debus, in such works as The Chemical Philosophy (1977), and Man and Nature in the Renaissance (1978), has detailed the hitherto ignored indebtedness of modern scientific rationalism to Hermetic philosophy. More recently, working in the same territory as Debus, Stephen A. McKnight has published, among other works, Sacralizing the Secular: The Renaissance Origins of Modernity (1989) and The Modern Age and the Recovery of Ancient Wisdom: A Reconsideration of Historical Consciousness, 1450-1650 (1991). Antoine Faivre has surveyed the entire Hermetic or theosophical tradition in works such as Modern Esoteric Spirituality (1992; edited with Jacob Needleman), Access to Western Esotericism (1994), and The Eternal Hermes: From Greek God to Alchemical Magus (1995).

Brian Copenhaver, in addition to an excellent translation of and commentary on selected texts from the

9. Citations for all of the works mentioned in this Introduction are to be found in the Bibliography.

Corpus Hermeticum (Hermetica, 1992), has dealt with the Renaissance Hermetic movement in a number of articles. Garth Fowden has discussed the Hermetica and its possible Egyptian origins in his The Egyptian Hermes (1986). Andre-Jean Festugière's work on the Hermetica is a landmark, and still unsurpassed in many ways (see in particular his four-volume La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste, 1949-1954, and Hermétisme et mystique païenne, 1967). G.R.S. Mead, a nineteenth-century theosophist, published a still-interesting three-volume translation of and commentary on the Hermetica entitled Thrice-Greatest Hermes (1906). Arthur Edward Waite, a member, along with such notables as W.B. Yeats and Aleister Crowley, of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, authored a number of fascinating, though often unreliable studies of Hermeticism in the earlier part of this century, including The Holy Kabbalah (1924), The Brotherhood of the Rosy-Cross (1924), and The Secret Tradition in Alchemy (1926). The works of Julius Evola, the controversial Italian philosopher and esotericist, are a treasure-trove of information on the Hermetic tradition, particularly his The Hermetic Tradition (1971), and The Mystery of the Grail (1934).

Ernst Benz is the best-known German scholar to have dealt with the influence of Hermeticism on German science and philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Two of his most important books have been translated into

English: The Mystical Sources of German Romantic Philosophy (1983), and The Theology of Electricity (1989). Rolf Christian Zimmerman has worked over much of the same terrain. His two-volume Das Weltbild des Jungen Goethe (1969/1979) is largely devoted to an account of the influence of the Hermetic tradition on Goethe and eighteenth-century Naturphilosophie. (Ronald Gray dealt with this topic, more briefly, in his Goethe the Alchemist, 1952.) Will Erich Peuckert has authored a number of important studies of Hermeticism, including Die Rosenkreutzer. Zur Geschichte einer Reformation (1928), and Pansophie. Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der weissen und schwarzen Magie (1936).

Among American authors, Andrew Weeks has written several useful studies of German mysticism and Hermeticism, including Böhme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic (1991), German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein (1993), and Paracelsus: Speculative Theory and the Crisis of the Early Reformation (1997). David Walsh, whose work will be treated in detail later, has discussed the influence of Böhme on German philosophy in a number of articles, and in The Mysticism of Innerworldly Fulfillment: A Study of Jacob Böhme (1983).

Studies of the Kabbalah and its influence are numerous. The two foremost authors in this field are

Gershom Scholem and Moshe Idel. Scholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (1946) and Kabbalah (1974), and Idel's Kabbalah: New Perspectives (1988) are indispensable.

Richard H. Popkin has dealt with various aspects of the Hermetic tradition, including the influence of the Kabbalah on Spinoza, in a number of articles. Recently, Allison Coudert has made a strong argument for the influence of Lurianic Kabbalah on Leibniz in her Leibniz and the Kaballah (1995). She is also the author of a useful study on alchemy, Alchemy: The Philosopher's Stone (1980). C.G. Jung's writings on alchemy--Psychology and Alchemy (1953), Mysterium Coniunctionis (1963), and Alchemical Studies (1967)--are built around his psychological theories and are not scholarly studies per se, but they are nevertheless very useful, and highly imaginative, sources of information on alchemy.

The foregoing is merely a sampling of the excellent work that has been done on Hermeticism in the last half century or so. Because of work like this, it has become impossible for scholars to dismiss, as they once did, the influence of these "esoteric" currents on modern thought. Debus, Kristeller, McKnight, Yates and others have convincingly argued that--in one of the great ironies of history--Hermeticism contributed to the growth of the modern scientific rationalist program. The Hermetic ideal of man as magus, achieving total knowledge, wielding

Godlike powers, bringing the world to perfection--an ideal which I shall discuss in detail shortly--was the prototype for the modern, rationalist conception of man as scientist, a superman bringing progress and Enlightenment to the world. Gerald Hanratty writes that "the widespread recourse to magical and alchemical techniques inspired a new confidence in man's operational powers. In contrast with the passive and contemplative attitudes which generally prevail during earlier centuries, Renaissance alchemists and Magi asserted their dominion over all levels of being."¹⁰

While scholars in the fields of science and literature have come to acknowledge the influence of Hermeticism on figures like Copernicus, Newton, Bacon, and Goethe, philosophers have been slow to recognize the same influence in their own camp. There is, however, a natural and obvious affinity between philosophy and Hermeticism. Although few philosophers would go as far as Hegel and claim that they have actually completed the quest for wisdom, this is their goal, and philosophy is only

10. Gerald Hanratty, "Hegel and the Gnostic Tradition: II," Philosophical Studies (Ireland), 31 (1986-87): 301-325; 308. David Walsh writes that "The empirical investigation of nature received its impetus from the conviction of Neoplatonic Hermeticism that reality is a hierarchy of occult or hidden sympathies uniting the whole and ultimately emanating from the divine One." See Walsh, "A Mythology of Reason: The Persistence of Pseudo-Science in the Modern World," in McKnight, 146.

intelligible in terms of this goal, even if it is held that philosophy only approaches it asymptotically.

This is not all there is to the affinity, however, and here I must introduce some points which will be discussed more thoroughly later on. In many, the "love of wisdom" is accompanied by a lust for power. There is the tacit assumption that the acquisition of total knowledge will endow the wise man with great power, whether that involves merely an increase in personal magnetism, or something else. This is precisely what characterizes the Hermeticism of figures like Giordano Bruno and Cornelius Agrippa. Wisdom has its own special allure that we try, disingenuously, to deny when we claim merely to "seek knowledge for its own sake."

As I will argue, Hegel's system is in fact an ultimate transformation and, thus, cancellation of "otherness"; a magical transformation of the world which makes the wise man its master. Typically, philosophers are not self-confident, charismatic, "born leaders." They tend instead toward painful insecurity, an ineptitude at practical affairs, and--at their worst--a neurotic ressentiment directed at the "vulgar" who cannot appreciate them. Alienated from the "real world," which they either consciously or subconsciously believe themselves unable to cope with, they bury themselves in a world of ideas (and frequently dream about "returning" to the real world in a

blaze of glory, as revolutionaries). Hermeticism, particularly its occult sidelights, provides the ultimate in wish-fulfillment for such types--and so does Hegel's system of "Absolute Knowledge." Hegel's system, with its "mastery" of otherness and virtual deification of the philosopher, is the ultimate "revenge of the nerds." For many people, philosophy amounts to a kind of sorcery of the intellect: the book, without the bell and candle.¹¹ It should not be surprising, then, to find the same people interested in both "rational" philosophy and "irrational" Hermeticism. Thus, to name some classic examples, Leibniz was interested in Kabbalism, alchemy, and Rosicrucianism; Kant was interested in the visions of Emmanuel Swedenborg¹²; Schelling was interested in Böhme,

11. In his essay "On Hegel: A Study in Sorcery," Eric Voegelin makes the same point. He writes "How far back in Western history must the growth of sorcery be traced that comes to its climax in the [Phenomenology of Spirit]?" As far as I know, nobody has yet dared to tackle the question." (See Voegelin, "On Hegel," 251 n18.) In fact, Voegelin's entire critique of Hegel depends on reading his philosophy as a sublimated power lust, a desire to completely master and remake the other. Voegelin's interpretation of Hegel owes a great deal to that of Alexandre Kojève, who emphasizes, as have I, Hegel's claim to have achieved knowledge of all things. I do not follow Voegelin, however, in his quasi-Nietzschean critique of Hegel. Both Voegelin and Kojève, who was an admirer of Hegel, neglect the Philosophy of Right, in which, as I will discuss in Chapter Seven, Hegel makes it very clear that his desire is not to remake the world. (Kojève ignored the Philosophy of Right because he was a Marxist.)

12. In a forthcoming book, Kant's Encounter With Swedenborg, Gregory R. Johnson argues that Kant was positively influenced by Swedenborg, and that his Dreams of a Spirit Seer is a work of philosophical esotericism, deliberately written so as to appear to be a scathing critique of Swedenborg, when in fact it is not.

Swedenborg, and Mesmer; Schopenhauer was interested in Böhme, Swedenborg, and Lavatar; James was interested in Swedenborg, spiritualism and ESP; C.D. Broad was interested in ESP; and, today, Michael Dummett is interested in tarot cards.¹³

Hegel fits this pattern quite well. He was a thinker who believed Absolute Knowledge was possible, and so was quite interested in the claims to "special wisdom" advanced by others. Hegel lived at a time of renewed interest in all things esoteric and forbidden, and was born into a German state (Württemberg) with a reputation for mysticism and occultism. There are references throughout Hegel's published writings as well as his lectures to many of the leading figures and movements of the Hermetic tradition. These references are in large measure approving. This is particularly the case with Hegel's treatment of Eckhart, Bruno, Paracelsus, and Böhme. Böhme is the most striking case. Hegel accords him considerable space in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy--more space, in fact, than he devotes to many significant "mainstream" thinkers in the philosophic tradition. Even where Hegel does not credit or discuss the Hermetic tradition, his own views are remarkably in line with it, and it is often fairly easy to trace lines of direct or indirect influence.

13. Michael Dummett, The Visconti-Sforza Tarot Cards (New York: G. Braziller, 1986).

There are innumerable instances of uncredited but apparent "borrowings" from the Hermetic tradition in Hegel's writings. These include, in broad strokes, a Masonic subtext of "initiation mysticism" in the Phenomenology of Spirit; a Böhmean subtext to the Phenomenology's famous Preface; a Kabbalistic-Böhmean-Lullian influence on the Logic; alchemical-Paracelsian elements in the Philosophy of Nature; an influence of Joachimite and pietist apocalypitics on Hegel's doctrine of Objective Spirit and theory of world history; alchemical and Rosicrucian images in the Philosophy of Right; an influence of the Hermetic tradition of pansophia on the system as a whole; an endorsement of the Hermetic belief in philosophia perennis; and the use of perennial Hermetic "symbolic forms" (such as the triangle, the circle, and the square) as structural, architectonic devices.

Like Goethe, whom I shall discuss in Chapter Two, Hegel was captivated by Hermeticism. He saw philosophy's task as the "restoration of the oldest of old things."¹⁴ His library included Agrippa, Böhme, Bruno, and Paracelsus. He read widely on Mesmerism, psychic phenomena, dowsing, precognition, and sorcery. He attended seances in Heidelberg. He publicly associated himself with known occultists, like Franz von Baader. He structured his

14. Karl Rosenkranz, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), 192.

philosophy in a manner identical to the Hermetic use of "correspondences." He relied on histories of thought which discussed Hermes Trismegistus, Pico della Mirandola, Robert Fludd, and Knorr von Rosenroth alongside Plato, Galileo, Descartes, and Newton. He stated in his lectures more than once that the term "speculative" means the same thing as "mystical." He formulated an esoteric doctrine of the Ather, which had peculiar Kabbalistic overtones. He believed in an "Earth Spirit" and corresponded with colleagues about the nature of "magic." He alligned himself, informally, with "Hermetic" societies like the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians. Even Hegel's "doodles" were Hermetic, as we shall see in Chapter Three when I discuss the mysterious "triangle diagram."

There are four major periods in Hegel's life during which he seems to have been strongly under the influence of Hermeticism, or to have actively pursued an interest in it. First, there is his boyhood in Stuttgart, from 1770-1788. As I shall discuss in detail in Chapter Two, during this period Württemberg was a major center of Hermetic interest, with much of the pietist movement influenced by Böhmeanism and Rosicrucianism (Württemberg was the spiritual center of the Rosicrucian movement). The leading exponents of pietism, J.A. Bengel and, in particular, F.C. Oetinger were strongly influenced by German mysticism, Böhmean theosophy, and Kabbalism. Typically, Hegel scholars have not thought

it necessary to consider the intellectual milieu of his boyhood. Hegel is almost universally understood simply within the context of the German philosophical tradition--as responding to Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. Needless to say, the influence of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling was decisive, but it was not the only influence on Hegel. Part of the reason other sources of influence are missed or ignored is that few scholars are familiar with the complexities of religious life in eighteenth-century Germany. Those who are familiar are almost always from disciplines other than philosophy, and almost always German. (The study of German pietism is almost exclusively the province of German-speaking scholars.) The religious and intellectual life of Württemberg is, however, the obvious place to begin to understand Hegel's own intellectual origins, characteristic ideas, and aims.

From 1793 to 1801 Hegel worked as a private tutor, first at Berne, then at Frankfurt. As I shall discuss in Chapter Three, Hegel's biographer Karl Rosenkranz referred to this period as a "theosophical phase" in Hegel's development. During this time, Hegel appears to have become conversant with the works of Böhme, as well as Eckhart and Johannes Tauler.¹⁵ Also during this period

15. As I shall discuss in Chapter One, Meister Eckhart is not, properly speaking, a "Hermetic" figure, but is more accurately termed a mystic. Nevertheless, his thought exercised a great influence on the Hermetic tradition. Franz von Baader made it his life's work to "synthesize" the thought of Böhme and Eckhart.

Hegel became involved in Masonic circles. In Jena (1801-07), Hegel's interest in theosophy continued. He lectured at length, and approvingly, on Böhme and Bruno. He composed several pieces, which have only come down to us in fragmentary form, employing Hermetic language and symbolism (see Chapters Three and Four). His lectures on the Philosophy of Nature during this time reflect an ongoing interest in Alchemy. It is likely that Schelling, who had come to Jena sometime earlier, introduced Hegel to his circle of friends, which included a number of Romantics who were heavily interested in Hermeticism. Schelling himself was an avid reader of Böhme and Oetinger, and likely encouraged Hegel's interest.

The final "Hermetic" period of Hegel's life is his time in Berlin, from 1818 until his death on November 14, 1831. This is contrary to what one might expect. It might be assumed that Hegel's "Hermeticism" was merely an aberration of youth, which the "arch rationalist" moved away from as he matured. Surprisingly, precisely the reverse seems to be the case. In Berlin, Hegel developed a friendship with Franz von Baader, the premiere occultist and mystic of the day. Together they studied Meister Eckhart. The preface to Hegel's 1827 edition of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline makes prominent mention of Böhme and Baader. His revised 1832 edition of the Science of Logic corrects a passage so as to

include a reference to Böhme. His preface to the 1821 Philosophy of Right includes alchemical and Rosicrucian imagery. His 1831 Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion show the influence of the mystic Joachim of Fiore, as well as certain structural correspondences to the thought of Böhme. In sum, all the evidence indicates that in the last period of his life, Hegel's interest in the mystical and Hermetic traditions intensified, and that he became more bold about publicly aligning himself with Hermetic thinkers and movements.

The divisions of Hegel's philosophy follow a pattern that is typical of many forms of mystical and Hermetic philosophy. The Phenomenology represents an initial stage of "purification," of raising the mind above the level of the sensory and the mundane, a preparation for the reception of Wisdom. The Logic represents an "ascent" to the level of pure form, of the eternal, of "Universal Mind." The Philosophy of Nature describes an "emanation" or "othering" of Universal Mind in the form of the spatio-temporal world. Its categories accomplish a transfiguration of the natural: we come to see the world as a reflection of Universal Mind. The Philosophy of Spirit accomplishes a "return" of created nature to the Divine by means of man, who can rise above the merely natural and "realize" God in the world through concrete forms of life

(e.g., the State and religion) and through speculative philosophy.

So far, Hegelian scholars have been reluctant to acknowledge the Hermetic influences on Hegel. The topic is often dismissed as unimportant or uninteresting (it is neither). Usually, it is treated as relevant only to Hegel's youth (which is false). One reason for this attitude is the recent tendency among influential Hegel scholars to argue that it is wrongheaded to treat Hegel as having any serious interest in metaphysics or theology at all, let alone the sort of exotic metaphysics and theology that we find in Hermeticism. This is the so-called "non-metaphysical reading" of Hegel. As Cyril O'Regan has pointed out, it goes hand in hand with an "anti-theological" reading.¹⁶ For instance, David Kolb writes that, "I want most of all to preclude the idea that Hegel provides a cosmology including the discovery of a wondrous new superentity, a cosmic self or a world soul or a supermind."¹⁷ But this is exactly what Hegel does.

The phrase "non-metaphysical reading" seems to have originated with Klaus Hartmann who, in his influential 1972 article "Hegel: A Non-Metaphysical View," identified Hegel's philosophical achievement as the construction of a

16. See Cyril O'Regan, The Heterodox Hegel (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 86.

17. David Kolb, Critique of Pure Modernity: Hegel, Heidegger, and After (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 42-43.

"hermeneutic of categories."¹⁸ Other well-known proponents of Hartmann's approach include Kenley Royce Dove, William Maker, and Richard Dien Winfield. The non-metaphysical/anti-theological reading, however, relies on ignoring or explaining away the many frankly metaphysical, cosmological, theological, and theosophical passages in Hegel's writings and lectures. The non-metaphysical reading is not an interpretation of Hegel but a revision of him. Its advocates sometimes admit this--e.g., Hartmann--but more often than not they offer their "reading" in opposition to other interpretations of what Hegel meant. It is, furthermore, no accident that the same authors finish out their "interpretation" by tacking a left-wing politics onto Hegel; they are, in fact, the intellectual heirs of the nineteenth-century "Young Hegelians" who also gave non-metaphysical, anti-theological "interpretations" of Hegel. The "non-metaphysical reading" is simply Hegel shorn of everything offensive to the modern, secular, liberal mentality. (This does not, however, imply that I am offering an alternative "right Hegelian" reading of Hegel. I am simply reading Hegel.)

Hegel's philosophy belongs squarely in the tradition of classical metaphysics. Hegel's treatment of the Absolute is structurally identical to Aristotle's treatment

18. Klaus Hartmann, "Hegel: A Non-Metaphysical View," in Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Alasdair MacIntyre (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972), 124.

of Substance (ousia): it is the most real, independent, and self-sufficient thing that is. Hegel identifies the Absolute with God, and does so both in his public statements (his books and lectures) and in his private notes--and with a straight face, without winking at us.¹⁹ Hegel does not offer the categories of his Logic as mere "hermeneutic devices" but as eternal forms, moments or aspects of the Divine Mind (Absolute Idea). He treats nature as "expressing" the divine ideas in imperfect form. He speaks of a "World Soul" and uses it to explain how dowsing and animal magnetism work. He structures his entire philosophy around the Christian Trinity, and claims that with Christianity the "principle" of speculative philosophy was revealed to mankind.²⁰ He tells us--again

19. In a July 3, 1826 letter to Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck (1799-1877), Hegel writes "I am a Lutheran, and through philosophy have been at once completely confirmed in Lutheranism" (Butler, 520; Hoffmeister #514a). In 1826 a small controversy erupted in Berlin when a priest attending Hegel's lectures complained to the government about allegedly anti-catholic statements made by Hegel. Hegel responded "Should suit be filed because of remarks I have made from the podium before Catholic students causing them annoyance, they would have to blame only themselves for attending philosophical lectures at a Protestant university under a professor who prides himself on having been baptized and raised a Lutheran, which he still is and shall remain" (See Butler, 532). In a review of a book by K.F. Göschel, Hegel makes it clear that he is pleased to have his work regarded as a "Christian philosophy." See Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik, 1829, nos. 99-102, 105-06.

20. In the Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Hegel notes that "the Arians, since they did not recognize God in Christ, did away with the idea of the Trinity, and consequently with the principle of all speculative philosophy" (LHP III, 20). J.N. Findlay writes that "[Hegel's] whole system may in fact be regarded as an

with a straight face--that the State is God on earth (and, incidentally, that means that the revolutionary politics of the "non-metaphysical" camp are, from an orthodox Hegelian perspective, quite impious!).

I see no reason not to take Hegel at his word on any of this. I am interested only in what Hegel thought, not in what he ought to have thought. To be sure, Hegel's appropriation of classical metaphysics and Christianity is transformative; Hegel is no ordinary believer. But his metaphysical and religious commitments are not exoteric. He believes that his Absolute and World Soul, and so forth, are real beings; they are just not real in the sense in which traditional, pious "picture-thinking" conceives of them.²¹

3. The Plan of the Study; Literature on Hegel and Hermeticism

In this study I will be concerned to do two things:

(1) To demonstrate the influence of Hermetic movements or figures on Hegel, by way of remarks made in his texts

attempt to see the Christian mysteries in everything whatever, every natural process, every form of human activity, and every logical transition." See Findlay, Hegel: A Re-Examination (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 131.

21. In the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel writes of picture-thinking: "Finding itself displaced into the pure realm of the Concept, it does not know where in the world it is" (EL § 3; Geraets, 27).

and lectures, works he is known to have had access to, and individuals he is known to have corresponded with or met.

(2) To situate Hegel's thought within the Hermetic tradition; to show how Hegel's thought can be understood as a reconstitution of Hermetic themes and ideas.

What will emerge from my discussion is, I hope, a radically new picture of Hegel's thought. It will no longer be possible to treat him as an "arch rationalist," as many still do, let alone to read him in a "non-metaphysical" or "anti-theological" manner. What is radical here is not simply the claim that Hegel was influenced by Hermeticism--that has been acknowledged by others, though the extent of the influence has not been adequately recognized--but rather the claim that Hegel saw himself as taking over and developing this tradition. Hegel has to be understood in terms of the theosophical pietist tradition of Württemberg--he cannot be seen simply as a critic of Kant. Indeed, Hegel was always a critic of Kant and never a wholehearted admirer precisely because he was "imprinted" early on by the tradition of pansophia, which was very much alive in Württemberg, and by Oetinger's ideal of the truth as the Whole (see Chapter Two). He could not accept Kant's scepticism, nor could Schelling, and for identical reasons. Yet they both recognized the power of Kant's thought and labored hard to move from his premises to their own conclusions, to circumvent his

scepticism at all costs, in the name of the speculative ideal of their youth.

Chapter One is devoted to the Hermetic tradition in Germany, up until the seventeenth century. Chapter Two starts with the early seventeenth century and covers up to and including Hegel's youth. I will be concerned in Chapter Two mainly with the intellectual milieu Hegel was born into. Chapter Three is central to my account. It presents an overall interpretation of Hegel's thought in light of his Hermetic connections. Chapters Four through Seven cover Hegel's major writings. Each of the last four chapters begins with an overview of the Hegelian text (or texts) in question. I have included these accounts chiefly for the benefit of readers who may be familiar with the Hermetic tradition, but not with Hegel. In addition, much of what I say about the indebtedness of these texts to Hermeticism depends upon how they are interpreted. Thus it is necessary to present some account, however brief, of how I interpret each text. In some cases, my interpretations are very different from those of other Hegelian scholars.

In these chapters, I will not be concerned to present an "intellectual biography" of Hegel. Such a work has already been written by H.S. Harris, and I do not intend to try and surpass it. The study is text-centered, although I have sketched-in important details about Hegel's life throughout. In terms of my treatment of Hegel's

intellectual development, I have not made fine distinctions between "stages" in his thinking. In general, I think that developmental readings which speak of "early" and "late" periods in a thinker's life stem from an inability to see the underlying identity or common tie between texts which are superficially different (e.g., in their use of different philosophical vocabularies). In the case of great thinkers--like Hegel, Kant, Plato, and Aristotle--I think that there is very little development. Great minds do not, for the most part, change (though in Chapter Seven I will discuss one important way in which I believe Hegel did change his mind, and his allegiances). The different works produced by great philosophers over a lifetime are usually variations on a theme, or themes. To borrow Hegel's language, one must learn to see the identity in difference.

In addition to Hegel's published writings, the primary sources I have relied upon include letters, manuscripts, lecture notes, student notes, and reports by contemporaries of remarks made by Hegel. Remarks culled from student notes have been published as the Zusätze to the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences, and the published editions of his lectures on the History of Philosophy, Art, Religion, and World History are also largely made up of student notes. Anyone who has ever graded final exams knows how many ways a lecture can be

misunderstood, so it is not surprising that doubts have been raised about the accuracy of these sources as reports of Hegel's words.

However, the students Hegel had, and the classes he held, were quite a bit different from those we know today. It was common in Hegel's time for three students to sit side by side, trying to transcribe everything the instructor said as exactly as possible. They would then meet and combine their notes into a single, highly accurate, transcript of the lecture.²² It helps to know, in addition, that all accounts indicate that Hegel spoke very slowly and haltingly. It was entirely possible for students to take verbatim notes of his lectures. Theodore Geraets, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris, authors of the translation of the Encyclopedia I have employed here, state that "there is no serious doubt that [in the Zusätze] we have a generally reliable record of what Hegel said."²³ Nevertheless, there has been considerable debate about the authenticity and value of the Zusätze. I agree with Willem A. deVries when he writes of the Encyclopedia,

To think that the Encyclopedia could be interpreted adequately without the Zusätze is simply to ignore the

22. Peter C. Hodgson, Editor's Introduction to G.W.F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Vol. I (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 5.

23. T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris, Translators' Preface to G.W.F. Hegel, The Encyclopedia Logic (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1991), viii.

fact that our background understanding of Hegel and his project--a background on which any further or new interpretation must draw--has already been deeply affected by the Zusätze, which have been part of the corpus since Hegel's death. Our understanding of Hegel has already been influenced by this material; we probably cannot extirpate its influence, so it is best to make it explicit.²⁴

If one doubts deVries's point, the following experiment should be attempted: try to read and comprehend the Encyclopedia without recourse to the Zusätze (some editions do omit them). It is difficult to see how anyone who did not attend Hegel's lectures could decipher some parts of the Encyclopedia without the remarks his students have preserved for us. In his foreword to A.V. Miller's translation of the Philosophy of Nature, J.N. Findlay writes that "without such material as is provided by the editorial Zusätze, [the Encyclopedia] would be largely uninterpretable, a monumental inscription in Linear B."²⁵ The actual text of the Encyclopedia, of course, was intended by Hegel merely as an outline for his lecture courses: he would read one of its paragraphs and then

24. Willem A. deVries, Hegel's Theory of Mental Activity (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), xiii.

25. J.N. Findlay, "Foreword" to Hegel's Philosophy of Nature, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), vii.

expound upon it, the real substance of the lecture consisting in the exposition. These paragraphs were not meant to be understood on their own. As to the lecture courses, in many cases we possess Hegel's lecture manuscripts and can check the accuracy of the student notes. These materials are an invaluable resource for understanding Hegel's thought. (Anyone who has never read Hegel's published writings would be well advised, considering the extreme difficulty of some of those texts, to begin with the lectures.)

As to scholarship on Hegel and the Hermetic tradition, it is interesting to note that much of what I have claimed here about Hegel would have been uncontroversial in the decade or two after his death. In the 1840's Schelling publicly accused Hegel of having simply borrowed much of his philosophy from Jakob Böhme. One of Hegel's disciples, Friedrich Theodor Vischer once asked "Have you forgotten that the new philosophy came forth from the school of the old mystics, especially from Jakob Böhme?"²⁶ Another Hegelian, Hans Martensen, author of one of the first scholarly studies of Meister Eckhart, remarked that, "German mysticism is the first form in which German philosophy revealed itself in the history of thought" ("philosophy" for Hegelians generally means Hegel's

26. See Ernst Benz, The Mystical Sources of German Romantic Philosophy, trans. Blair R. Reynolds and Eunice M. Paul (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1983), 2.

philosophy).²⁷ Wilhelm Dilthey noted the same continuity between German mysticism and speculative philosophy.²⁸

Perhaps the most famous nineteenth-century study of "Hermetic" aspects in Hegel was Ferdinand Christian Bauer's Die christliche Gnosis (1835).²⁹ Voegelin no doubt had Bauer in mind when he stated that Hegel was regarded by his contemporaries as a gnostic thinker. Bauer's was one of the first works to attempt to define gnosticism and to distinguish between its different forms. Hermetism can be considered an "optimistic" form of gnosticism, but Bauer does not discuss it. Instead, after a lengthy discussion of gnosticism in antiquity, he argues that Jakob Böhme was, broadly speaking, a modern gnostic, and that Schelling and Hegel can be seen as Böhme's intellectual heirs, and thus as gnostics themselves. Die christliche Gnosis is about the closest thing to a book on "Hegel and the Hermetic tradition" that has yet been published, though, as I have said, Bauer's focus is on gnosticism as such, not Hermeticism.³⁰ In 1853, Ludwig Noack published a two

27. Ibid., 2.

28. Ibid., 2.

29. Full bibliographical information on all the works mentioned in this Introduction is to be found in the Bibliography. Generally I have mentioned only books here. Both books and articles are listed in the Bibliography.

30. Although scholarship on gnosticism has advanced considerably since Bauer's time, his conclusions about Hegel have stood the test of time. M-M. Cottier refers to Hegel's philosophy as "Une Gnose christologique" in his L'Atheisme Du Jeune Marx: Ses Origines Hegeliennes (Paris, 1969), 20-30. Eric Voegelin has also argued, critically, for Hegel as a "gnostic thinker," for instance in Science, Politics, and Gnosticism, 40-44, 67-80.

volume work, Die Christliche Mystik nach ihrem geschichtlichen Entwicklungsgange im Mittelalter und in der neueren Zeit dargestellt in which he dealt with the Idealists as modern representatives of mysticism.

Discussions of various aspects of Hegel's connection to Hermeticism are often coupled with similar discussions of Schelling. This is the case with Ernst Benz's aforementioned Mystical Sources of German Romantic Philosophy, a brief but indispensable text by the leading scholar in this highly specialized field. In 1938, a German scholar named Robert Schneider published Schellings und Hegels schwäbische Geistesansichten in Würzburg. Most of the copies of Schneider's book were destroyed when Würzburg was bombed during the war--and Schneider was destroyed along with them. His book is an invaluable study of the theosophical pietism prevalent in Württemberg during Hegel and Schelling's youth. (Some of the same territory was covered, less satisfactorily, by Julius Klaiber in his 1877 book Hölderlin, Hegel und Schelling in ihren schwäbischen Jugendjahren.)

Other works by German scholars dealing with the relationship of mysticism or Hermeticism to German Idealism and Hegel include Josef Bach's Meister Eckhart der Vater der Deutschen Spekulation. Ein Beitrag zu einer Geschichte der deutschen Theologie und Philosophie der mittleren Zeit (1864); Gottfried Fischer's Geschichte der Entdeckung der

deutschen Mystiker, Eckhart, Tauler u. Seuse im 19. Jahrhundert (1931); Emanuel Hirsch's Die idealistische Philosophie und das Christentum (1926); Fritz Leese's Philosophie und Theologie im Spätidealismus, Forschungen zur Auseinandersetzung von Christentum und idealistischer Philosophie im 19. Jahrhundert (1919), and Von Jakob Böhme zu Schelling. Zur Metaphysik des Gottesproblems (1927); Wilhelm Lütgert's Die Religion des Deutschen Idealismus und ihr Ende (1923); and Heinrich Maier's Die Anfänge der Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus (1930). There has also been a fair amount of Dutch literature on the topic, including G.J.P.J. Bolland's Schelling, Hegel, Fechner en de nieuwere theosophie (1910); J.d'Aulnis de Bourrouill's Het mystieke karakter van Hegel's logica; and H.W. Mook's Hegeliaansch-theosofische opstellen (1913). Among works in French, Jacques d'Hondt's Hegel Secret (1968) is an extremely important study of Hegel's relationship to secret societies like the Masons, Illuminati, and Rosicrucians.

As to literature in English, there is George Plimpton Adams's interesting work The Mystical Element in Hegel's Early Theological Writings (1910). Frederick Copleston authored a useful article, "Hegel and the Rationalization of Mysticism" in 1971. Perhaps the most widely-read English-speaking interpreter of Hegel, J.N. Findlay was himself a theosophist and his interpretation of Hegel is attuned to its mystic-Hermetic aspects. In Findlay's

Hegel: A Re-Examination (1958), he suggests tantalizingly that Hegel was a "nineteenth-century representative of some philosophia Germanica perennis."³¹ Gerald Hanratty, following in the footsteps of Bauer, published a two-part article on "Hegel and the Gnostic Tradition" (1984-7), in which, like Bauer, he treats the Hermetic tradition as an offshoot of gnosticism.

H.S. Harris's two-volume intellectual biography of Hegel, Hegel's Development (1972/1983), contains asides regarding Hegel's relationship to Eckhart, Böhme, Baader, and alchemy. Recently, Cyril O'Regan has published a groundbreaking study of the mystical roots of Hegel's philosophy of religion, The Heterodox Hegel (1994). In addition to the aforementioned Mysticism of Innerworldly Fulfillment, David Walsh has also written an important doctoral dissertation entitled The Esoteric Origins of Modern Ideological Thought: Hegel and Böhme (1978), in which he makes strong claims about Hegel's indebtedness to Böhme.

Yet there has never been a systematic, book-length study of all of Hegel's writings in terms of their Hermetic elements. Certainly no one (with the exception of Voegelin, who barely develops his claims) has treated Hegel as a part of the Hermetic tradition: not just as influenced by that tradition, but as carrying on its project and aims.

31. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-Examination, 49.

No one has systematically treated Hegel as a Hermetic thinker.

4. Hermes Trismegistus and the Origins of the Hermetica

In the remainder of this Introduction I will present an abbreviated account of the origins and doctrines of the Hermetica, as well as an even more abbreviated account of the first 1,500 years or so of the Hermetic tradition. This is a necessary preliminary to the chapters which follow, as many scholars are still very unfamiliar with this unusual part of intellectual history.

The Greek God Hermes was the "messenger of the gods," escort of the dead from earth to Tartarus, god of commerce, author of treaties, guardian of travelers, and patron of liars and thieves.³² In addition, he was supposed to possess mastery over speech and interpretation. This was the attribute of Hermes emphasized by Plato when, in the Cratylus (408a), he associates "Hermes" with the verb Hermeneuein, "to interpret." Hermes's mastery of speech is more significant than it appears, for in fact it amounts to a mastery of all things, i.e. wisdom.³³ Hermes's function as "guide of souls" is of equal importance, for the guidance involved is mainly spiritual or intellectual

32. Bernard Evslin, Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths (New York: Bantam Books, 1978), 47.

33. In the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance, Hermes-Mercury was seen as the god of eloquence. See Antoine Faivre, The Eternal Hermes: From Greek God to Alchemical Magus (Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press, 1995), 22.

guidance, guidance in finding wisdom. Joseph Campbell writes: "Not infrequently, the supernatural helper is masculine in form. In fairy lore it may be some little fellow of the wood, some wizard, Hermit, shepherd, or smith, who appears to supply the amulets and advice that the hero will require. The higher mythologies develop the role in the great figure of the guide, the teacher, the ferryman, the conductor of souls to the afterworld. In classical mythology this is Hermes-Mercury, in Egyptian, usually Thoth. . . ."34

As to Hermes's wisdom, Athenaeus and others claim for Hermes the discovery of all of the arts and sciences, including music.³⁵ He was from very early on named as the mythical inventor of the science of alchemy. Hermes's aspect as possessor of wisdom--esoteric wisdom--is suggested also by his mastery over night and death,³⁶ and by the fact that Hermes is androgyne.³⁷ The androgyne is symbolic of the transcendence of duality, of the dichotomies typical of unthinking perception and social convention. Ordinary mortals cannot think beyond these dualities and so, as Parmenides put it, they "wander two-headed." Hermes is the master of the rites that lead the

34. Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 72.

35. Faivre, Eternal Hermes, 14

36. Garth Fowden, The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 25.

37. Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology (New York: Penguin Books, 1959), 417.

worthy beyond "common sense" (doxa) to a higher state of being and understanding: the mystic initiation. Hermes represents the immanence of the transcendent: the entrance of divine wisdom into the life and mind of the initiate.³⁸

However, we are mainly concerned here with Hermes Trismegistus, not the classical Greek Hermes. These are, or came to be, quite distinct personages. Hermes Trismegistus is a product of Hellenistic syncretism. It was the custom of Greeks (as well Romans) living in foreign lands to identify the indigenous gods with their own. So it was that the Greeks identified Amun with Zeus, Imhotep with Asclepius, and Thoth with Hermes.³⁹

To the Egyptians, Thoth was the moon-god, secretary and councillor to Re, the sun-god. Because the phases of the moon correlate with changes of season, Thoth was also "lord of time."⁴⁰ Since the Egyptians' complex ritual system involved different observances over the course of a year Thoth was, by extension, credited with inventing religious and civil institutions as well as the sacred texts of the priests. Like Hermes, then, Thoth was the source of occult wisdom and power. He was credited, as Plato tells us in the Phaedrus (274c-275b), with the invention of the arts and sciences, including writing. Artapan (circa 200 BC) states that Thoth taught the

38. Campbell, Hero, 73

39. Brian Copenhaver, Hermetica (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), xxii-xxiii.

40. Fowden, 22.

Egyptians "navigation, the lifting of stones with cranes, weapons, water pumps, war machines, and philosophy."⁴¹ Thoth was knowledge and wisdom personified.⁴²

Thoth's clergy, centered at Khemennu, the city the Greeks would rechristen Hermopolis, developed a cosmogony in which, of course, Thoth played a pivotal role. For his priests, Thoth was "self-created." He became, in the words of Garth Fowden, "a demiurge who called things into being merely by the sound of his voice."⁴³ This was a common idea in the Near East. G.R.S Mead notes that, "As the representative of the Reason immanent in the world, Thoth is the mediator through whom the world is brought into manifestation. He is the tongue of Ra, the herald of the will of Ra, and the Lord of Sacred Speech."⁴⁴ Thoth is the Logos. Among the many honorific titles conferred on Thoth by his priests was "eight-times great."⁴⁵ Brian Copenhaver, however, has written of a text from 172 BC in which Thoth is called "three times great."⁴⁶ We are thus on our way to Hermes Trismegistus.

41. Eusebius, Praep. Evang. IX 27, 6. Quoted in Faivre, Eternal Hermes, 77.

42. John A. Wilson, "Egypt" in Henri Frankfort, et. al. The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 76.

43. Fowden, 77.

44. G.R.S. Mead, Thrice Greatest Hermes, Vol. 1 (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1992), 34.

45. F. Ll. Griffiths, Stories of the High Priests of Memphis: the Sethon of Herodotus and the Demotic Tales of Khamuas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), 58. Quoted from a demotic text of A.D. 46-47. Cited in Mead Vol. 1, 82.

46. Fowden, xiv.

But how exactly did Hermes-Thoth become "Hermes Trismegistus"? That is a difficult question to answer. What is clear is that Hermes Trismegistus was regarded as a semi-divine human being, who lived in a remote historical time and died. According to Faivre, this belief is traceable to the influence of Euhemerus (third century B.C.) who theorized that the gods had been actual human beings, made "divine" after their deaths.⁴⁷ Through a complex sequence of events, somehow "Hermes Trismegistus," conceived as an actually-existing wise man, became distinguished as a separate entity from Hermes-Thoth, the god. According to Fowden, the title "trismegistus" was first given to Hermes in texts of the second century BC.⁴⁸ Eventually, a "genealogy" of Hermes was developed to account for the multiple Hermeses. Hermes-Thoth was conceived as the progenitor of the line. Hermes-Thoth's son was named Agathodaimon ("good daimon"), whose son in turn was the famous Trismegistus. Trismegistus's son was Tat (which began as a misspelling of "Thoth"), one of the characters in the Corpus Hermeticum. In sources passed along by Plutarch, Isis is said to be a daughter of Hermes.⁴⁹

The standard picture of Hermes Trismegistus is summarized by Fowden: "Hermes is a mortal who receives

47. Ibid., 15-16.

48. Fowden, 216.

49. Faivre, Eternal Hermes, 17, 81.

revelations from the divine world and eventually himself achieves immortality through self-purification, but remains among men in order to unveil to them the secrets of the divine world."⁵⁰ Hermes, in other words, is a bodhisattva. The twenty-third fragment of Stobaeus, known as The Sacred Book of Hermes Trismegistus or Kore Kosmou treats Hermes Trismegistus as "knowing all things" and possessing a sympathetic link with the divine order.⁵¹ According to Stobaeus, God sent Hermes Trismegistus to earth to teach the gnosis to mankind. He went about this by imparting his wisdom to certain worthy disciples: Tat, Asclepius, and others. The Corpus Hermeticum is a "record" of Hermes's conversations with these disciples, as well as the teachings of other divine beings, such as Poimander.

Clement of Alexandria reports that there were forty-two books of Hermes, which contained the collected wisdom of the Egyptians.⁵² Other reports differ as to the number of the Hermetic writings. What has come down to us is a grabbag of treatises of varying lengths. We possess fifteen Greek treatises, plus the Latin Asclepius. There is a tradition among scholars of dividing these works into two categories: "philosophical" (or "theoretical") and "technical." The technical Hermetica are what would today be termed "occult": they concern magical ceremonies and

50. Fowden, 28.

51. Faivre, Eternal Hermes, 78.

52. Stromata VI.4, 35ff.

operations. What philosophical content they have is slim and unsophisticated. As to the philosophical content of the philosophical Hermetica, it is oracular and devoid of argument, presenting itself as the revelation of divine wisdom.

Like Plato's dialogues, the philosophical Hermetica can be distinguished according to their pedagogic intent, different texts being intended for readers at different levels of spiritual attainment.⁵³ Their common aim, however, was to lead the worthy to gnosis, and through gnosis to immortality.⁵⁴ The Hermetic "initiation" is a process of training or re-training the intuitive portion of the intellect to see the Reason inherent in the world. As Fowden notes, the Hermetic "initiation" seems to fall into two parts, one dealing with self-knowledge, the other with knowledge of God.⁵⁵ It can easily be shown, simply on a theoretical level, that these two are intimately wedded. To really know one's self is to be able to give a complete speech about the conditions of one's being, and this involves speaking about God and His entire cosmos. As Pico della Mirandola puts it, "he who knows himself knows all things in himself."⁵⁶ Also, in the Near East it was typical to portray God as hovering strangely between

53. Fowden, 97.

54. Copenhaver, xxxvii.

55. Fowden, 106.

56. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Oration on the Dignity of Man, trans. A. Robert Caponigri (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1956), 28.

transcendence and immanence. The attainment of gnosis, enlightenment, involved somehow seeing the divine in oneself, indeed becoming divine.

Marsilio Ficino and most of the scholars of the Renaissance believed the Corpus Hermeticum to be extremely ancient and Hermes Trismegistus to have been a contemporary of Moses. Subsequent scholarship has shown this claim to be almost certainly false. Most scholars now date the composition of the Hermetica to the first to third centuries A.D. Assigning dates to the Hermetica is by no means an exact science. This is particularly true in light of the fact that one of the chief criteria used is doctrinal. If, for instance, some passage in one of the treatises seems rather Platonic, as if it were drawing on, say, the Timaeus, scholars conclude that it definitely must have been written after Plato, whereas it is just as possible that the Corpus Hermeticum is a rather late record of a tradition of thought even older than Plato, a tradition that may, indeed, have influenced Plato.

While there is certainly a Greek influence on the Hermetica, it would be wrong, as Festugière did, to argue that that influence dwarfs all others. For instance, in more recent years scholars have acknowledged a distinct Jewish influence on the Hermetica. G.R.S. Mead and others have raised the possibility of some influence of the teachings of Philo of Alexandria on the Hermetic authors.

(I will have occasion to return much more extensively to the dialogue between Hermeticism and Jewish philosophy later.) Faivre notes that shortly after 196 BC, the Jewish author Artapan identified Hermes-Thoth with Moses.⁵⁷

More controversial, however, is the influence of Egypt on the Hermetica.⁵⁸ As I have already noted, Festugiere almost completely discounted an Egyptian influence, choosing to interpret the unquestionably Egyptian elements of the Hermetic narrative and dramatis personae as mere "window dressing." More recently, scholars such as Jean-Paul Mahé and Garth Fowden have argued that this judgement is quite wrong.⁵⁹

Mahé takes the extreme position--the antithesis of Festugiere--that Hermetism must be understood simply as Egyptian esoteric wisdom translated into Greek. Fowden takes something of a middle position, arguing that there is more Egyptian influence than allowed by Festugiere. Still, his conclusions are quite striking. First of all, Fowden believes that some of the technical or magical Hermetica were probably translations of Egyptian texts: "there is much in the Greek magical formulae," he claims, "that can

57. Faivre, Eternal Hermes, 76.

58. Johann Jacob Brucker in his Historia Critica Philosophiae, which appeared in five Latin volumes in 1742-1744, claims that the Jews absorbed the theology of the Egyptians. This was one of the histories of philosophy Hegel used in preparing his lectures.

59. See Fowden; J.-P. Mahé, Hermès en Haute-Egypte (Quebec, 1978-82).

only be explained in terms of Egyptian antecedents."⁶⁰ There is a report by Iamblichus, mentioned by Fowden, concerning an Egyptian priest named Bitys, who is alleged to have translated some of the sacred texts of Thoth into Greek, deliberately employing Greek philosophical vocabulary in the process.⁶¹ According to Iamblichus, Bitys was supposed to have found these texts in the temples of Sais. As Fowden notes, this is the same location where Solon, as reported by Plato in the Timaeus (21e-26e; Critias 113a-b), is alleged to have met Egyptian priests who told him of the distant past of his country, and to have translated some of their books into Greek.⁶²

Three crucial components of the Western Hermetic tradition, in which I include Hegel, are already present in Egyptian thought: the analysis of divinity into "moments" or aspects; the possibility of human beings attaining divine or semi-divine status; and the ideal of a "complete speech" about the whole as imparting a special power to the knower. John A. Wilson writes that the difference between Egyptian and Hebrew creation mythology is that Egypt emphasizes "the self-emergence of a creator-God, whereas the creator-God of Genesis existed alongside chaos."⁶³

60. Fowden p. 66

61. Iamblichus, On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians, viii. 5, x.7; viii.4.265.

62. It is worth noting, as Fowden mentions, that "Like Iamblichus, Plato explains that a certain amount of Greek terminology inevitably creeps into these priestly sources in the course of transmission." Fowden, 30.

63. Wilson, 52.

According to the Book of the Dead, Atum brought creation into being by naming himself, by naming the parts of his body. These became, then, eight gods. First came Shu (air) and Tefnut (moisture), then Geb (earth) and Nut (sky), and then Isis and Osiris, and Seth and Nephthys. (This makes nine, counting Atum.)⁶⁴ What is interesting here, and what separates this account from truly primitive creation myths, is that these eight separate gods are parts of Atum--they are aspects, in effect, of his being.

I want to suggest that this is the first appearance in Western thought of anything like a categorical ontology, an attempt to articulate Being into its "modes" or "moments." This is what we find in Plato's late dialogues, such as the Parmenides and Sophist, and, of course, in Hegel's Logic. Here, though, what we have is, to use the Heideggerian term, an "onto-theology"; an account not really of Being, but of the source of Being, the god Atum.⁶⁵ Still, the

64. David Walsh states that the Kabbalistic sephiroth, some of which are ordered in pairs, resemble "the male and female gods of the cosmological myth and occupy a similar position as the series of procreative couples who are the origin of all things. In particular, the second and third Sefiroth are regarded as such a couple, where the light of Wisdom is sown into the 'celestial mother' of the divine Intelligence to generate the later members." This, plus the account of the "infinite" beyond creation, and the status of the Ennead as "moments" of Atum's being, which I will shortly describe, suggests a possible Egyptian influence on Jewish mysticism, which was preserved by the Kabbalists. See David Walsh, The Esoteric Origins of Modern Ideological Thought: Böhme and Hegel (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1978), 68.

65. David Fideler makes a couple of interesting points about Heliopolis and Being: "In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, Heliopolis is referred to as On--a

idea that we can know the aspects or moments of the creator God is fundamental to the theosophical tradition in general, and to the Hermetic tradition in particular. Perhaps the most fascinating and important Egyptian text of all, however, is the so-called "Memphite Theology" of roughly 700 BC. This appears to be an attempt to synthesize the various different Egyptian cosmogonies current at the time into a complete account of creation, the universe, and the gods.

As Wilson puts it, "all the strange elements in the text of the Memphite Theology were present in other Egyptian texts in isolated instances; only in this text were they brought together into a broad philosophical system about the nature of the universe."⁶⁶ The text reads: "Ptah, the Great One; he is the heart and tongue of the Ennead of gods . . . who begat the gods . . . There came into being the heart, and there came into being on the tongue (something) in the form of Atum."⁶⁷ We have the suggestion that Atum is created through the speech of Ptah, the "heart and tongue of the Ennead of gods." That this is indeed the case is made clear by the following passage: "Now the Ennead of Atum came into being from his seed and

transliteration of the Egyptian name. Interestingly, this word in Greek is the philosophical term which means "Being," and Plato uses the symbol of the Sun, in the Republic, to represent this very principle." See David Fideler, Jesus Christ: Sun of God (Wheaton, Ill: Quest Books, 1993), 248.

66. Wilson, 55.

67. Quoted in Wilson, 57.

by his fingers; but the Ennead (of Ptah) is the teeth and the lips in this mouth which uttered the name of everything and (thus) Shu and Tefnut came forth from it."⁶⁸

We can see here, as many have pointed out, the probable origin of the New Testament's doctrine of the creation through the Logos. It was a distinctively Egyptian doctrine, which became part of later Egyptian Hermes lore. Plutarch, for example, reports that "the Egyptians tell us that Hermes had a short-armed body."⁶⁹ "Short-armed" is *gali angkona*, which, as G.R.S. Mead informs us, literally means "weasel-armed." Plutarch remarks further on in his text (lxxiv, 3) that the weasel (gale) or marten was supposed, according to legend, to conceive through the ear and give birth through the mouth. From this, Mead concludes, interestingly, that "this animal was evidently a symbol of mind-conception. 'Weasel-armed' may thus symbolise some faculty of the interpretive mind (Hermes)."⁷⁰

The Egyptians believed that the nature or essence of an object was somehow contained in its name, and that the name therefore possesses a supernatural force, embodied in the letters or sounds that make it up.⁷¹ If mankind could

68. Quoted in Wilson, 58. Here, the account of Atum's creation of his gods differs from that given at Heliopolis by making it the result of an act of masturbation.

69. Plutarch, The Mysteries of Isis and Osiris, XXII.2.

70. Mead I, 205.

71. Fowden, 63-64; see also Corpus Hermeticum XVI: "The very quality of the speech and the <sound> of Egyptian words have in themselves the energy of the objects they

come to know the same words, could we acquire the same divine power? The Egyptians answered yes: the magician, the possessor of esoteric wisdom, could become even equal to the gods, once he knew the words of power.⁷² Egyptian initiation, in the age of Hermes Trismegistus and earlier, was an "immortalization," a divinization of the human being. Egyptian magical incantations even sometimes addressed the gods quite brusquely, as equals. Fowden writes that "This self-identification with a god, common in the magical papyri, is an authentically Egyptian trait."⁷³ It is a trait that is passed along unchanged into the Greek Corpus Hermeticum.

Wilson writes that for the Egyptians "there was no firm and final dividing line between gods and men."⁷⁴ The clearest exemplification of this idea is the Pharaoh, who was considered to be both a man and a living god. The Egyptian attitude toward the gods exhibits a kind of hubris totally alien to the Greek way of thinking.⁷⁵ It is reflected not only in the belief that human beings can themselves become divine, but in the view that the divine

speak of," trans. Copenhaver, 58. This doctrine is reflected in the later Hebrew myth of Adam's naming of the animals (which Hegel regarded as very important, and discussed in his notes from 1804 and 1805/6 on the Philosophy of Spirit), as well as the gematria of Kabbalists such as Abraham Abulafia. We have seen Ptah, a god, produce creation through the utterance of words.

72. Again, the Hebrew esoteric tradition is not far behind here, with its legend of the creation of the Golem.

73. Fowden, 26.

74. Wilson, 55.

75. See Fowden, 112.

can be analyzed discursively into its "parts." These beliefs are, of course, wedded, for it is through a discursive knowledge of the divine that the divine can be manipulated and man can become the equal of the gods. This is simply a logical consequence of the Egyptian belief that words carry magical power.

In the Corpus Hermeticum we find a kind of "bridge position" between Egyptian occultism and the modern Hermeticism of Hegel and others. Instead of conceiving words as carrying literal occult power, words come to be seen as carrying a kind of existential empowerment: the ideal of Hermetic theosophy becomes the formulation of a "complete speech" (teleeis logos-perfect discourse) about the whole, which, when acquired, will radically transform and empower the life of the enlightened one. So Hegel writes in a fragment preserved by Rosenkranz,

Every individual is a blind link in the chain of absolute necessity, along which the world develops. Every individual can raise himself to domination over a great length of this chain only if he realizes the goal of this great necessity and, by virtue of this knowledge, learns to speak the magic words which evoke its shape. The knowledge of how to simultaneously absorb and elevate oneself beyond the total energy of suffering and antithesis that has dominated the world

and all forms of its development for thousands of years--this knowledge can be gathered from philosophy alone.⁷⁶

5. The Hermetica--Major Themes

Most scholars working today see little unity to the Hermetic texts. At the other extreme, however, there is J. Kroll's Die Lehren des Hermes Trismegistus (1914), an attempt to demonstrate the fundamental coherence of the treatises. My own approach tends towards that of Kroll, and in the following account of the content of the Hermetic texts I shall be emphasizing where they agree.

First, consider the following justly famous lines from Corpus Hermeticum XI:

All things are in god but not as lying in a place . .
 . So you must think of god in this way, as having
 everything--the cosmos, himself <the> universe--like
 thoughts within himself. Thus, unless you make
 yourself equal to god, you cannot understand god; like
 is understood by like. Make yourself grow to
 immeasurable immensity, outleap all body, outstrip all

76. Karl Rosenkranz, 141. The fragment is referred to by Harris and Knox as "The Supposed Conclusion of the System of Ethical Life." See H.S. Harris and T.M. Knox, System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), 178.

time, become eternity and you will understand god. Having conceived that nothing is impossible to you, consider yourself immortal and able to understand everything, all art, all learning, the temper of every living thing. Go higher than every height and lower than every depth. Collect in yourself all the sensations of what has been made, of fire and water, dry and wet; be everywhere at once, on land, in the sea, in heaven; be not yet born, be in the womb, be young, old, dead, beyond death. And when you have understood all these at once--times, places, things, qualities, quantities--then you can understand god.⁷⁷

Aside from developing the Egyptian "divinization of man" thesis discussed in the previous section, this passage is interesting for a number of other reasons. First, its description of the incorporeal nature of God, and of the immanence of all things in God, is quite sophisticated. In particular, the claim that all things are within god "like thoughts within himself" is reminiscent of Plato's Parmenides (132b). Also, we have a clear indication of what divinization involves: since God is all things, to become equal to God is to know all things. We might quibble that this is surely not the same thing, but it must be kept in mind that to know the natures of things, to be

77. Trans. Copenhaver, 41.

able to speak about them comprehensively is, to the Egyptian mind, to have power over them. Here, the speaker's exhortations to, for example, "be everywhere at once" or "be old, young, dead" cannot be taken literally. Rather, they are exhortations to know and understand all of these things. So, we see again that enlightenment for the Hermetists is the acquisition of total knowledge.

Corpus Hermeticum X formulates the "divinization" thesis interestingly: "we must dare to say that the human on earth is a mortal god but that god in heaven is an immortal human."⁷⁸ Again, this underscores the Egyptian aspect of the Hermetica, the belief that there is no qualitative difference between men and gods. Fowden writes that "the knowledge of God that the Hermetic initiation is supposed to bring is not an external knowledge of one being by another, but an actual assumption of the attributes of God: in short divinization."⁷⁹ He quotes a Hermetic magical invocation: "come to me, Lord Hermes, as fetuses into the wombs of women . . . I know you, Hermes, and you know me. I am you and you are me."⁸⁰

We do not really know anything about the Hermes cult that may have employed the Hermetic texts as its sacred writings. We know little or nothing of their rites of initiation or how they lived. We can, however, say that

78. Trans. Copenhaver, 36.

79. Fowden, 110.

80. Fowden, 25-26.

Hermetic initiation differed from initiation into, for example, the Eleusinian mysteries in classical Greece. We also happen to know quite little about what happened at Eleusis, but it does seem to be the case that illumination there consisted in the participation in some kind of arresting experience which was intended to change the initiate permanently.⁸¹ We do not know what that experience was, but we do know that it could be had by young and old, rich and poor, educated and uneducated. This is not the case with Hermetic initiation. Salvation and divinization for the Hermetists were, as we have seen, through gnosis, through understanding. This could be attained only through hard work, and then it could be attained only by some. Hermes is quoted in Corpus Hermeticum XVI as stating that his teaching "keeps the meaning of its words concealed," hidden from the discernment of the unworthy.

However, it would be a mistake to treat the Hermetic initiation as purely intellectual. Enlightenment does not occur simply by learning a set of doctrines. One must not only know doctrine, but have the real-life experience of the truth of the doctrine. One must be led up to illumination carefully; one must actually explore the blind alleys that promise illumination but do not deliver. Only in this way will the true doctrine mean anything; only in

81. Joseph Campbell, Transformations of Myth Through Time (New York: Harper and Row, 1990), 189ff.

this way will the initiate's life actually change. Fowden writes that Hermetic initiation is envisaged as "a real experience, stretching all the capacities of those who embark upon it," and he quotes Corpus Hermeticum IV: "it is an extremely tortuous way, to abandon what one is used to and possesses now, and to retrace one's steps towards the old primordial things."⁸² We will see in Chapter Four that this Hermetic conception of initiation, both intellectual and emotional, is preserved by Hegel.

Enlightenment, for the authors of the Hermetica and for Hegel, is not just an intellectual event; it is expected to change the life of the enlightened one. Philosophy, for Hegel, is about living.⁸³ In brief, the man who achieves Selbstbewusstsein is the man who becomes selbstbewusst: confident, self-actualized, no longer an ordinary human being. Klaus Vondung writes that "The Hermeticist does not need to escape from the world in order to save himself; he wants to gain knowledge of the world in order to expand his own self, and utilize this knowledge to penetrate into the self of God. Hermeticism is a positive Gnosis, as it were, devoted to the world."⁸⁴ To know everything is to in some sense have control over everything. This is what I term the ideal of man as magus, and it is unique to the Hermetica. See, for example,

82. Fowden, 106

83. H.S. Harris, Hegel's Development, Vol. II: Night Thoughts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 191ff.

84. Vondung, 132.

Corpus Hermeticum IV: "All those who heeded the proclamation and immersed themselves in mind [nous] participated in knowledge and became perfect [or "complete," teleioi] people because they received mind. But those who missed the point of the proclamation are people of reason [or "speech," log<ik>on] because they did not receive <the gift of> mind as well and do not know the purpose or the agents of their coming to be."⁸⁵ In other words, the men of complete self-understanding who know even the "purpose or the agents of their coming to be" are perfect human beings. If Hegel did not believe, after the manner of the Egyptians, that man could literally become God, he certainly believed that the wise man is daimonic: a more-than-merely-human participant in the divine life.

However, the initiate is not simply a cosmic spectator, he plays a crucial role in the cosmos itself. The Hermetica conceive God as somehow needing to create, and specifically needing created man's knowledge of Him. Consider these lines from the "Discourse of Hermes to Tat: The mixing bowl or the monad" (Corpus Hermeticum IV): "If you force me to say something still more daring, it is [God's] essence to be pregnant with all things and to make them. As it is impossible for anything to be produced without a maker, so also is it impossible for this maker [not] to exist always unless he is always making everything

85. Trans. Copenhaver, 16-17; emphasis added.

. . . He is himself the things that are and those that are not."⁸⁶ See also Corpus Hermeticum X: "God's activity is will, and his essence is to will all things to be."⁸⁷

Finally, consider Corpus Hermeticum XIV: "For the two are all there is, what comes to be and what makes it, and it is impossible to separate the one from the other. No maker can exist without something that comes to be."⁸⁸

The clear meaning is that God requires creation in order to be God. This runs completely counter to the orthodox Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions, according to which God is entirely transcendent and self-sufficient, receiving nothing from creation. It is a doctrine for which Jakob Böhme was severely censured. But the Hermetica do not simply tell an emanationist tale, they move yet another step closer to Hegel by making the wise man the critical figure in God's "self-actualization," as we see in Corpus Hermeticum X: "For God does not ignore mankind; on the contrary, he recognizes him fully and wishes to be recognized. For mankind this is the only deliverance, the knowledge of God. It is ascent to Olympus."⁸⁹ In short, it is man's end to achieve knowledge of God (or "the wisdom of God," theosophy). In so doing, man realizes God's aim to be recognized, he fills a need or a lack in God. In substance, this is but a mythic approach

86. Trans. Copenhaver, 20.

87. Trans. Copenhaver, 30.

88. Trans. Copenhaver, 56.

89. Trans. Copenhaver, 33.

to Hegel's doctrine of the coming into being of man, the being which can reflect on the nature of its being and its conditions. This self-thinking thought is the actualization of the Absolute or God in history, and it is the actualization of our nature as well.

As Fowden notes, what God gains from creation is recognition: "Man's contemplation of God is in some sense a two-way process. Not only does Man wish to know God, but God too desires to be known by the most glorious of His creations, Man . . ."⁹⁰ As Corpus Hermeticum Book I states, "Holy is god, who wishes to be known and is known by his own people."⁹¹ I will refer to this conception of God and of the cosmos as circular, in that it involves God returning to Himself and truly becoming God--achieving omniscience through finally achieving self-knowledge--by means of the intellectual activity of created man. The standard "Platonic" or "Gnostic" view leaves unexplained why God creates or emanates at all. It tells us what humans truly ought to pursue in order to actualize their nature, yet it says nothing about why this should matter to God, or how any of this scheme and its creation figures as necessary to God or as flowing from His nature. On this view, the cosmos certainly isn't dull or geistlos, as in the conception of the atheist or the materialist, but it is absurd. The great advantage of the Hermetic, Kabbalist,

90. Fowden, 104.

91. Trans. Copenhaver, 7.

and Hegelian conceptions is that their cosmology achieves closure: they tell us why the cosmos and the human desire to know should exist in the first place.

The Hermetic ideal is to capture creation--including the conception of God as requiring our knowledge of Him--in a complete or perfect speech. The Latin Asclepius was also known as the "perfect discourse" (in Greek teleiis logos), which can also mean "Complete" or perhaps "Encyclopedic" discourse (which means, of course, "circular" discourse). We have seen that this ideal has its antecedents in the Egyptian attempts, such as the Memphite theology, to present a complete and synthetic account of existence. Its influence can be seen in Genesis. Adam and Eve traditionally are said to have eaten from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." However, another plausible translation of the same Hebrew phrase would be "tree of the knowledge of all things."⁹²

The full details of the Hermetic cosmology need not concern us here, as the Hermetic tradition does not slavishly adhere to them. However, a few points are essential. First, there is the famous doctrine of "man as microcosm." A later Hermetic text, the Emerald Tablet, begins with the famous lines "As above, so below." This maxim became the central tenet of Western occultism, for it laid the basis for a doctrine of cosmic sympathies or

92. See Rabbi J.H. Hertz, The Pentateuch and Haftorahs (London: Soncino Press, 5721-1961), 8, n9, and 10, n5.

correspondences. For the Hermetists, the cosmos is not a loosely-connected, or, to use Hegelian language, externally-related set of particulars. Rather, everything in the cosmos is internally-related, bound up with everything else. Divine powers understood variously as "energy" or "light" pervade this structure.⁹³

The link between the philosophical and technical Hermetica may be understood as follows: the internal relations within the cosmos make it possible for the magician to effect change in one area by acting on another, even if there is no apparent "physical" connection between the two. This is the doctrine of "occult sympathies." In the Renaissance Marsilio Ficino and others drew up elaborate tables of "correspondences." Hoping to acquire the virtues associated with, say, some particular heavenly body, they would wear amulets made from a stone associated with that body, on which they would carve the symbol of the planet. This is a direct outgrowth of the theory behind the technical Hermetica.

The features of Hermetism which became enduring features of the Hermetic tradition, and are also to be found in Hegel, can be enumerated as follows:

1. Illumination involves capturing the whole of reality in a complete, encyclopedic speech.

93. Fowden, 77.

2. An initial stage of "purification" in which the initiate is purged of false intellectual standpoints is required before the reception of the true doctrine.
3. Man can transcend his own nature through gnosis; he becomes empowered through the possession of the complete speech.
4. Man can know the aspects or "moments" of God as a system of ideas.
5. God requires creation in order to be God.
6. God is in some sense "completed" or has a need fulfilled through man's contemplation of Him.
7. The universe is an internally-related whole pervaded by cosmic energies.

6. The Hermetic Tradition I: Proclus to Ficino

In this section and the next I will, very briefly, chart the development of these ideas through the Hermetic tradition up to Hegel's day. What follows will be a highly compressed and abridged account of an extremely complex history. I am also deliberately omitting consideration of the rich tradition of Hermeticism in Germany, as it is the focus of the following chapter.

Fowden mentions some evidence that the Christian gnostics had access to the Hermetica.⁹⁴ The pagan

94. Fowden, 114.

Harranians or Sabians of upper Mesopotamia even went so far as to adopt the Hermetic writings as their holy texts, and to translate the Hermetica into Syriac and Arabic.⁹⁵

(Scott conjectures that the copy Marsilio Ficino acquired of the Corpus Hermeticum may have been one that had belonged to the Harranians.)

The first major figure who can be considered to have been influenced by Hermetism is Proclus (AD 412-485). It is in speaking of Proclus in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy that Hegel makes one of his only references to the Corpus Hermeticum: "Proclus studied everything pertaining to the mysteries, the Orphic hymns, the writings of Hermes [die Schriften des Hermes], and religious institutions of every kind, so that, wherever he went, he understood the ceremonies of the pagan worship better than the priests who were placed there for the purpose of performing them" (LHP II, 433; Werke 19, 467).

Hegel admires Proclus as a "profoundly speculative man" and states that with him the Neo-Platonic philosophy "has at last reached a more systematic order" (LHP II, 434, 435; VGP II 468, 469). What Hegel seems to admire chiefly in Proclus is his use of the dialectic and the triadic form. Proclus attempts to demonstrate, according to Hegel,

95. See Walter Scott, Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings which Contain Religious or Philosophic Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924-36; reprint, Boston: Shambala, 1985), i, 97-103.

"the many as one and the one as many," and how "all determinations, and particularly that of multiplicity, are resolved into themselves and return into unity" (LHP II, 436; Werke 19, 470). What Proclus adds to the Plotinian system is closure: he does not simply describe a series of emanations from the One, eventually resulting in our world; he attempts to show a purpose to the hypostases of the One by having the "end" of the process return to and thus "complete" the One. According to Hegel, Proclus's account of the production of each stage of the One's "cosmic loop" is expressed in dialectical triads which emphasize conflict and tension as giving rise to each new moment. In short, Hegel sees much of himself in Proclus.

It is difficult to know how much of Proclus's teachings to attribute to the influence of Hermetism. The doctrine of a "return" of creation to its source, and of a source which requires or needs this return, certainly does not seem to be Plotinian, at least on a reading that avoids speculative liberties. As I have argued, however, this doctrine is present in the Hermetica. Like many other philosophers, Plotinus omits from his cosmology the remarkable fact that a being exists that can understand that cosmology. The great contribution of the Hermetic counter-tradition, and Hegel, is that it makes that being, the philosopher, central to its picture of the cosmos and of the nature of God.

The relationship between Hermetism, Gnosticism and Neoplatonism is extremely complex. Because of Plotinus's place in the canon, it is natural for scholars to seize on certain elements in the Hermetica as well as the Jewish Kabbalah, as "unquestionable" borrowings from Neoplatonism. Oftentimes the ideas of certain thinkers, such as Marsilio Ficino, are termed "Neoplatonic" even though they would be better explained by reference to their authors' acquaintance with the Hermetica. It is probable that the influences among these different schools were reciprocal. Though Plotinus attacks the followers of Hermes Trismegistus, as well as the Gnostics, his philosophical heirs, such as Proclus and Iamblichus (end of third century to 330?), seem to have been open to Hermetic influence.

Although he was certainly no Hermeticist, no account of the Hermetic tradition would be complete without mentioning Augustine (354-430). One reason why men of the Renaissance such as Ficino were so quick to believe in the remote antiquity of Hermes Trismegistus and his writings was that this picture was endorsed by Augustine and other fathers of the church, including Lactantius. In the City of God, Augustine quotes at length the famous passage from the Asclepius concerning the magical animation of statues. He attacks the practice, and magic in general, as impious.⁹⁶

96. Augustine, The City of God, VIII, xxlii-xxvi.

Around 1000 AD, Hermes was described in the Christian Suda as "an Egyptian wise man who flourished before Pharaoh's time. He was called Trismegistus on account of his praise of the Trinity, saying that there is one divine nature in the trinity."⁹⁷ During the Middle Ages "Hermes Trismegistus" was given as the author of scores of occult works, and even medical texts. Hermetic influences are present in the works of such mystics of the high middle ages as Ramon Lull, St. Bonaventure, and Meister Eckhart. However, as Faivre notes, it was not until the Renaissance that any Hermetic texts other than the Asclepius were read in the West.⁹⁸

Prominent among this "pseudo-Hermetic" literature were the various Arabic texts attributed to Hermes. According to the Arabic tradition, there were three Hermeses. The first was more or less identified with Thoth, the second was the father of Pythagoras, and the third was the inventor of alchemy. The Arabs settled in Egypt beginning in 640 and, as Faivre tells it "found manuscripts and inscribed tablets in the pyramids."⁹⁹ Thus was born a genre among the Arabs of often quite romantic works, including the Book of Crates, the Picatrix, Geber's The Elementary Book of Foundation, The Treasure of Alexander,

97. Suda E.3038, quoted in Copenhaver, xli.

98. Faivre, Eternal Hermes, 18.

99. Faivre, Eternal Hermes, 91; Faivre (p. 20) also notes that "Even the Arabic term for 'pyramid,' haram, is connected with the name of Hermes, Hirmis."

and the Liber de Causis, also known as the Book of Causes of Apollonius the Wise and the Book of the Secrets of Creation.

The most famous of these works, however, was the Emerald Tablet. A very short work (about a page long) it was nevertheless extremely influential, particularly on alchemy. According to the text, Apollonius of Tyana discovered the tomb of Hermes Trismegistus, and, inside, an engraved emerald tablet still clutched in his gnarled hands. The text of the tablet then follows. It consists of twelve propositions. The initial one is the most famous: "In truth certainly and without doubt, whatever is below is like that which is above, and whatever is above is like that which is below, to accomplish the miracles of one thing." Others are clearly alchemical in nature: "Separate the earth from the fire and the subtle from the gross, softly and with great patience."¹⁰⁰ The oldest known version of the Emerald Tablet dates from the eighth century AD. Arab Spain functioned as a conduit for passing this and other Islamic-Hermetic texts to Christian Europe.

In the late twelfth-century, a book appeared in Western Europe entitled Book of Propositions or Rules of Theology, said to be by the Philosopher Termegistus (also known as the Book of Twenty-Four Philosophers). It contained twenty-four propositions, the second of which

100. Fideler, 233.

subsequently enjoyed a long career, borrowed by a succession of other authors: "God is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere."¹⁰¹ As Copenhaver notes, this work became a favorite of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas.¹⁰² Aquinas was supposed to have authored a work in which it was claimed that Abel, the son of Adam, carved esoteric teachings on stones, which then passed into the hands of Hermes Trismegistus, and then to Thomas.¹⁰³ Thomas's teacher, Albertus Magnus, was a renowned alchemist who mentioned Hermes Trismegistus by name in twenty-three of his writings. Joachim de Fiore (1135-1202) was a Calabrian monk who developed a mystical theory of history which came to exercise an influence on German pietism and Hegel. I shall discuss his ideas in Chapter Seven. Ramon Lull of Majorca (1235-1316) was perhaps the first individual to develop a systematic science for the achievement of pansophia. I shall discuss his work in Chapter Five.

In 1460, fourteen out of the fifteen "philosophical" Hermetica were brought to Florence from Macedonia by a monk who, as Frances Yates tells us, was an agent of Cosimo de'Medici, assigned to locate manuscripts for him.¹⁰⁴

101. This passage is highly descriptive of many kinds of mystical philosophy. Ronald Gray takes it as Spinozistic! See Gray, Goethe the Alchemist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 72.

102. Copenhaver, xlvii.

103. Faivre, Eternal Hermes, 94.

104. Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 12-13.

Remarkably, Cosimo ordered Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) to interrupt the translation he was preparing of Plato's dialogues to begin work immediately on a Latin translation of the Corpus Hermeticum. Ficino's translation, titled Pimander (after the first of the treatises) and printed for the first time in 1471, had an incredibly wide circulation. It went through sixteen editions up till the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁵

In the preface to Pimander, Ficino presented his own genealogy of wisdom, which he culled from a variety of sources, including the church fathers Augustine, Lactantius and Clement.¹⁰⁶ It began with Hermes Trismegistus and Zoroaster, and traced a direct line to Plato. Subsequent to his translation of the Hermetica, Ficino developed his own magical philosophy of occult correspondences, described in detail by Frances Yates in her Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition.

7. The Hermetic Tradition II: Pico to William Blake

The next major event in the history of Hermeticism was the re-discovery by Europeans of the Jewish Kabbalah after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492.¹⁰⁷ Jewish

105. Ibid., 17.

106. Ibid., 14-15.

107. I use the spelling "Kabbalah" because it was employed by the greatest scholar of Kabbalism, Gershom Scholem. Many other authors--e.g., Frances Yates--use "Cabala" (from which we get the English "cabal"). "Qabbalah" is sometimes encountered.

trade and social networks served as a conduit for Kabbalistic teachings. I shall discuss the Kabbalah at length in Chapters Five and Seven. First to make significant use of the Kabbalah was Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494). Pico, a younger contemporary of Ficino, joined Kabbalah and Hermetism in the words of Antoine Faivre, "through the basic theme of Creation through the Word."¹⁰⁸ Frances Yates writes that "for the Renaissance mind, which loved symmetrical arrangements, there was a certain parallelism between the writings of Hermes Trismegistus, the Egyptian Moses, and Cabala which was a Jewish mystical tradition supposed to have been handed down orally from Moses himself."¹⁰⁹ With Pico begins the tradition of "Christian Kabbalism."

In the Oration on the Dignity of Man, Pico relates his discovery of the Kabbalah:

I acquired these books at considerable expense and, reading them from beginning to end with the greatest attention and unrelenting toil, I discovered in them (as God is my witness) not so much the Mosaic as the Christian religion. There was to be found the mystery of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word, the divinity of the Messiah; there one might also read of original sin, of its expiation by Christ, of the

108. Faivre, Eternal Hermes, 98

109. Yates, Giordano Bruno, 84.

heavenly Jerusalem, of the fall of the demons, of the orders of angels, of the pains of purgatory and of hell.¹¹⁰

Suffice it to say that with Pico, the Kabbalah and Hermeticism are intimately wedded.¹¹¹ In 1486, Pico, at the tender age of twenty-three, went to Rome with "nine hundred theses": precepts derived, he claimed, from the perennial philosophy of the ages. He hoped to debate the theses in public. Instead, he created such a scandal that he was forced to publish an Apology in 1487. Along with the Apology, he published the famous Oration on the Dignity of Man, in which the "man as magus" thesis is argued for most eloquently. The Oration opens with the famous lines from Asclepius I.6: "a great wonder, Asclepius, is man."

A few followers of Pico may be mentioned. Franciscus Georgius of Venice continued Pico's program of the unification of all knowledge, first in a mystical poem published in 1525. Augustinius Justinianus Genuensis (1470-1536), bishop of Nesbia published a slim volume in 1513 entitled A Prayer Full of Piety to the Omnipotent God Composed of the 72 Hebrew and Latin Divine Names; together with an Interpretative Commentary. As Joseph Blau points out, however, Genuensis seems to have been influenced less

110. Pico, Oration, 64-65.

111. Pico is often named as the founder of Christian Kabbalah, though this honor really should go to Ramon Lull (1232-ca. 1316).

by Pico than by Johannes Reuchlin (see Chapter One).¹¹² Cesare d'Evoli of Naples published in 1589 a treatise (De divinis attributis quae sephirot ab Hebraeis nuncupantur) in which he argued for the importance of Kabbalah as a refinement of the Platonic theory of forms.

In her Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, Frances Yates traces the development of Renaissance Hermeticism from Ficino to Pico to Bruno. Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) is significant for the purposes of this study in part because Hegel devoted a section of his Lectures on the History of Philosophy to him. (Hegel also discusses Ficino and Pico in his Lectures, although quite briefly and in no depth; LHP III, 112; Werke 20, 14-15). An auction catalog of Hegel's library, compiled in 1832, reveals that Hegel owned Bruno's works.¹¹³ Hegel's remarks on Bruno in the Lectures fill roughly eighteen pages in the Suhrkamp edition of his works.

Bruno represents something of a step backward in the Hermetic tradition. Unlike Pico he rejected Kabbalism and Christianity. Commenting on Bruno's Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast, Frances Yates writes

112. Joseph Leon Blau, The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 33.

113. Berzeichniss der von dem Professor Herrn Dr. Hegel und dem Dr. herrn Seebeck hinterlassen Bücher-Sammlungen (Berlin, 1832). In the collection of the Stadtsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

What is Giordano Bruno doing here? It is quite simple. He is taking Renaissance magic back to its pagan source, abandoning the feeble efforts of Ficino to do a little harmless magic whilst disguising its main source in the Asclepius, utterly flouting the religious Hermetists who tried to have a Christian Hermetism without the Asclepius, proclaiming himself a full Egyptian who . . . deplores the destruction by the Christians of the worship of the natural gods of Greece, and of the religion of the Egyptians, through which they approached the divine ideas, the intelligible sun, the One of Neoplatonism.¹¹⁴

Rejecting Pico's Kabbalism, Bruno took Ficino's lily-white, Christianized magic of correspondences and developed it into the basis for a new Hermetic religion. Bruno conceived himself as the messiah of this new religion.¹¹⁵ Its central teaching was a familiar idea, that the "All" is One.¹¹⁶ This must certainly have appealed to Hegel, for in his schooldays, he and friends such as Hölderlin adopted a pantheist outlook, their motto being hen kai pan (One and All; I shall discuss this more fully in Chapter Two).¹¹⁷

114. Yates, 214.

115. Yates, 339.

116. Yates, 248.

117. H.S. Harris, Hegel's Development, Vol. I: Toward the Sunlight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 96ff.

In his Lectures, Hegel refers to Bruno's as a "noble soul" which has "a sense of indwelling, and knows the unity of its own Being and all Being to be the whole life of thought" (LHP III, 121-122; Werke 20, 24). Hegel compares Bruno with Proclus: "With Proclus in the same way the understanding, as substantial, is that which includes all things in its unity" (LHP III, 124; Werke 20, 26). Calling Bruno a "very original mind," Hegel states that his philosophy is "on the whole certainly Spinozism, Pantheism" (LHP III, 123; Werke 20, 25). And: "This system of Bruno's is . . . objective Spinozism, and nothing else; one can see how deeply he penetrated." Summarizing this Spinozism-Pantheism, Hegel writes

The main endeavour of Bruno was . . . to represent the All and One [das All und Eine], after the method of Lullus, as a system of classes of regular determinations. Hence, in the manner of Proclus he specifies three spheres: First, the original form (huperousia) as the originator of all forms; secondly, the physical world, which impresses the traces of the Ideas on the surface of matter, and multiplies the original picture in countless mirrors set face to face; thirdly, the form of the rational world, which individualizes numerically for the senses the shadows of the Ideas, brings them into one, and raises them to

general conceptions for the understanding. The moments of the original form itself are termed Being, goodness (nature or life), and unity. (LHP III, 134-135; Werke 20, 36)

Another summary passage employs language strikingly like the later Preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit (1807): "The unity of life he thus determines as the universal, active understanding (nous), which manifests itself as the universal form of all the world, and comprehends all forms in itself . . . It is the artist within, who shapes and forms the material without. From within the root or the seed-grain it makes the shoot come forth; from this again it brings the branches, and from them the twigs, and from out of the twigs it calls forth the buds, and leaves, and flowers" (LHP III, 124; Werke 20, 26). (For the Phenomenology passage see Miller, 2; PG, 4).

In the end, Hegel, as he does with all of his predecessors, points out the fatal flaws that prevent Bruno from arriving fully at wisdom. In this case, Hegel's analysis is fascinating for it is nearly identical to his critique of Kant: "But while the system of Bruno is otherwise a grand one, in it the determinations of thought nevertheless at once become superficial, or mere dead types, as in later times was the case with the classification of natural philosophy . . . [Bruno's] twelve

forms laid down as basis neither have their derivation traced nor are they united in one entire system, nor is the further multiplication deduced" (LHP III, 137; Werke 20, 39). I will have more to say about Bruno in the following chapter, where I will deal with his stay in Germany and his influence on philosophy there.

Considered the last of the Italian Renaissance philosophers, Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) was the herald of a coming Utopia in which an elite group of Magi, led by an all-wise Sun Priest would hold sway over a peaceful and spiritually enlightened new world. Campanella set out these dreams in a work entitled City of the Sun. He was influenced by, among others, the millenarian apocalypics and Joachim of Fiore.

Italy was not the only place where such daimonic men dwelled. England also was home to a rich tradition of Hermeticism. Among the Englishmen who dabbled in Kabbalah mention must be made of John Colet (1466-1519), who published Two Treatises on the Hierarchies of Dionysius (1497), employing liberal "borrowings" from Pico's works. The most celebrated figure in the history of English Hermeticism is undoubtedly John Dee (1527-1608), Kabbalist and Astrologer Royal to Queen Elizabeth I. Dee was one of the most learned men of his time, and Frances Yates has argued in her The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age that he exercised a great influence on English foreign

policy, and provided the inspiration for the Rosicrucian movement in Germany (which I shall discuss in Chapter Two). Robert Fludd (1574-1637), a younger contemporary of Dee, was a Rosicrucian Kabbalist and author of a number of richly illustrated works in which he aimed at a total synthesis of human knowledge.

Jakob Böhme had quite an impact in England, first through the translation and publication of his works by John Sparrow (1615-1665). It was John Pordage (1608-1681) who was the center of the first Böhmean movement in England (called "behemism" there). From this group was formed the Philadelphian Society, led by Jane Lead (1623-1704), a visionary with whom Pordage had a liaison after the death of his wife in 1668. With Lead's death, the Böhme movement in England more or less died out. Böhme's thought was kept alive there, however, by solitary figures such as the theologian William Law (1686-1761) and the poet and painter William Blake (1757-1827).

Aside from individuals, two organizations are important in the history of the Hermetic tradition. These are the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians. The history of the two movements is long and complex. The Freemasons are the older of the two. At one time, both were not only centers of Hermetic and alchemical mysteries, but organizations advocating political reform and religious

toleration. Freemasonry became essentially a highly influential "club" for the advocates of Enlightenment rationalism. In time, the Rosicrucians were transformed into a reactionary group devoted to undermining the influence of the Masons and of the Enlightenment philosophy in general. I will devote a much more extensive discussion to both organizations in Chapters Two and Seven.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE HERMETIC AND MYSTICAL TRADITIONS OF GERMANY

1. Early German Mysticism

In 1684, W. C. Kriegsmann published in Tübingen Conjectures on the Origin of the German People, and Their Founder Hermes Trismegistus, who is Canaan to Moses, Tuitus to Tacitus, and Mercury to the Gentiles (Conjectaneorem de germanicae gentis originae), in which he attempted to prove that the name of the Teutons derives from Theut or Thoth, and thus that the German peoples were founded by Hermes-Thoth. Leibniz repeated Kriegsmann's conjecture as fact in his Theodicy (1710).¹ The theory, if true, would certainly make the Germans the world's most truly "Hermetic" people. However, they do not require Kriegsmann's philology to secure this distinction for themselves: it is demonstrated by the rich history of Hermetic and mystical thought in Germany from the middle ages to the present. This chapter is an attempt to present a brief but comprehensive account of the major figures and movements in German Hermeticism and esotericism, up to the end of the seventeenth century. Chapter Two will be primarily devoted to Hegel's own time. It will present an account of the Hermetic context of Hegel's early development.

1. G. W. Leibniz, Theodicy, trans. E.M. Huggard (LaSalle, Ill: Open Court, 1985) para. 142, p. 212.

The first significant German figure who can be counted as Hermetic is Albertus Magnus (1193/1206-1280), the teacher of Thomas Aquinas. Albert was renowned as an alchemical adept. Another of his students, Dietrich of Freiburg (also known as Theodoric of Freiburg; ca. 1250-1311) melded Albertian alchemical theory with the Neoplatonism of Proclus. Dietrich held a version of emanation theory in which a transcendent God gives rise to the One. Contra Plotinus, he identified the One with the Logos which informs all the levels of creation, including Man, the "image of the One."²

The fourteenth century in Germany, known as the "century of heresy,"³ witnessed a tremendous flowering of mystical activity. Virtually no centers of higher learning existed in Germany until the fourteenth century, and as a consequence it was necessary for German thinkers to go to Italy and France to be educated. Thus, among other things, Hermetic philosophy--which had seeped into France and Italy through Arabic Spain--gradually found its way into Germany. The Rhineland was already a haven for freethinkers and mystics. The region produced its own homegrown mysticism in the form of the so-called Frauenmystik, which included figures such as Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179). Her Book of Divine Works (1163-1173) includes the memorable image of

2. Lewis White Beck, Early German Philosophy (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1969), 39.

3. Ibid., 41.

creation as an act of God making countless mirrors in which to behold Himself.

Johanes Eckhart, better known as Meister Eckhart, was born in Hocheim near Gotha about 1260 and died about 1327. Although it is difficult to demonstrate direct Hermetic influences on Eckhart, the content of his thought is undeniably "Hermetic," and was co-opted by German Hermeticists in later times. Eckhart's significance for German philosophy and intellectual culture in general cannot be overstressed. Ernst Benz writes that

the German language of the High Middle Ages was essentially poetic. German literature of the Middle Ages was the literature of the Minnesang, of the troubadours, of the Heldenlied, of epic songs such as the Nibelungenlied, which means that it was a language of images, allegories, parables, not a language of abstract concepts and philosophical and logical terms. There was no philosophical terminology in the German language, and there were no German translations of Latin philosophical or theological treatises. . . . The German language of the Middle Ages did not take part in the scholastic development of philosophy,

theology, and the sciences. It is only with . . .
Meister Eckhart that all this changed.⁴

Eckhart was a Dominican monk and university professor, initially at Paris and then at Cologne. Part of his duties in Cologne consisted in preaching to convents of Dominican nuns. The sisters did not know Latin, and so Eckhart was forced to translate Latin philosophical and theological terms into German. (For instance, Eckhart was the first to translate the Latin actualitas as "Werkelicheit," or in modern German, Wirklichkeit.) Given the rather unusual nature of his thought, he was also forced to employ common words in an uncommon way, and to employ metaphors and images of all kinds (thus, words like "abyss," Abgrund, took on philosophical or mystical meaning). For the first time, through Eckhart, philosophy began to speak German. Benz writes that, "Meister Eckhart is indeed the creator of a new German philosophical and theological terminology; and since his own theology was a mystical one, founded on mystical experiences and intuitions, it is truly with mystical speculation that philosophical speculation in German began."⁵

4. Ernst Benz, The Mystical Sources of German Romantic Philosophy, trans. Blair R. Reynolds and Eunice M. Paul (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1983), 8.
5. Ibid., 10. Benz gives as examples of philosophical terms originating in early German mysticism Abbild, Anschauung, Bild, Bildhaftigkeit, entbilden, entichen, Entichung, ergründen, Erkennen, Erkenntnis, Form, Gestalt, Grund, Ichheit, das Nichts, Nicht-Ich, nichtigen,

Eckhart preached that intelligere, knowing, is the basic attribute of the divine. As with Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, Eckhart's God thinks His own thought, but unlike Aristotle's God, Eckhart's is thoroughly involved with the world. In fact, it is hard to see where the difference between God and the world is to be drawn at all for Eckhart, for he taught that apart from God there is nothing.⁶ Like so many mystics, Eckhart conceived God as the "coincidence of opposites." By collapsing the distinction between God and World, Eckhart obviously opened himself up to the charge of pantheism--but actually his philosophy is much more radical than simple pantheism. Eckhart taught that men ought not pray to God, for it is demeaning to beg and thus to make of one's self a slave. He saw man as possessing a far more exalted nature.

In his tenth sermon, Eckart preached that just as a son requires a father to give him existence, so the father is not father without the son. Similarly, God would not be God without creation: God must create to actualize His nature.⁷ (We have seen that this is one of the innovations

Nichtigkeit, Sein, das Seiende, Ungrund, Urgrund, Vernunft, Vernünftigkeit, Verstand, Verständigkeit, Verständnis, Wesen, Wesenheit.

6. Sermon XXI; see J.M. Clark, Meister Eckhart, An Introduction to the Study of His Works with an Anthology of His Sermons (Edinburgh and London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1957), 230.

7. In the Philosophy of Spirit, in one of the Zusätze, Hegel remarks that "According to Christianity, God has revealed Himself through Christ, His only begotten Son. Picture-thinking takes this proposition to mean that Christ is merely the organ of this revelation, as if that which is

of the Hermetica.) Just as in Hegel more than five hundred years later, God the Father is conceived as "abstract" and "incomplete" apart from nature. Nature or creation is the Son. The "return" of the Son to the Father is the Holy Spirit and, again as in Hegel, this specifically denotes mankind. In Sermon XII Eckhart declares "When all creatures pronounce His name, God comes into being."⁸ God requires mankind to complete the "circle" of His being. We can fulfill this function because, as a part of nature, we too are the "Son" and possess a divine "spark" within us (Sermon XX). To find this spark, affirm its existence, and strive to develop and increase the divine within us, is to hold up a mirror to creation: the Logos informing the world can reflect on itself through human self-knowledge.⁹

revealed is something other than the source of the revelation. However, the true meaning of the proposition is rather that God has revealed that His nature consists in having a Son, i.e. to differentiate, to limit Himself, yet to remain with Himself in His difference; to contemplate and reveal Himself in the Son, and through this unity with the Son, through this being-for-self in the other, to be absolute spirit. Consequently, the Son is not the mere organ, but the very content of the revelation" (PS § 384, 2; Petry I, 57; emphasis added).

8. Clark, 184; quoted in Beck, 52.

9. In Karl Rosenkranz's discussion of Hegel's early Jena Philosophy of Spirit, he writes: "Hegel still loved, even now, as we already saw above, in his first exposition of metaphysics [the "Triangle Fragment"--see Chapter Four], to present the creation of the universe as the utterance of the absolute Word, and the return of the universe into itself as the understanding of the Word, so that nature and history become the medium between the uttering and the understanding of the Word--a medium which itself, as other-being, vanishes." Karl Rosenkranz, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), 193.

Eckhart writes: "If I had not been, there would have been no God" (Sermon IV).¹⁰ This is just the actualization of God: human self-reflection.

Eckhart comes quite close in many places to affirming that man just is God. He writes in one sermon: "The soul cannot bear to have anything above it. I believe that it cannot bear to have even God above it. If he is not in the soul, and the soul is not as good as he, it can never be at ease."¹¹ Not surprisingly, in July 1326 Eckhart was brought up on charges of heresy, and subsequently cleared. The charges were reopened the following year, however, but Eckhart died before anything came of it. In 1329 a papal bull, In Agro Domenico, condemned a number of Eckhart's theses. As a consequence, Eckhart's pupils were frightened into retreating from some of their master's more speculative ideas, at least publicly.¹² Two of these pupils are worthy of mention: Johannes Tauler (1300-1361) and Heinrich Suso (or Seuse, ca. 1300-1366) continued to work along roughly the same lines as their teacher.

Franz von Baader reports that upon reading a certain passage in Eckhart, he heard Hegel exclaim "da haben wir es ja, was wir wollen!" ("There, indeed, we have what we want!")¹³ Hegel quotes Eckhart not once in his published

10. Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation by Raymond Bernard Blakney (New York: Harper and Bros., 1944), 231.

11. Ibid., 163.

12. Beck, 46.

13. Hegel in Berichten seiner Zeitgenossen, ed. Günther Nicolini (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1970), 261.

writings, and only once in his 1824 Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: "The eye with which God sees me is the same eye by which I see Him, my eye and His eye are one and the same. In righteousness I am weighed in God and He in me. If God did not exist nor would I; if I did not exist nor would He" (LPR I, 347-48).¹⁴

Despite this, quite a number of authors have attempted to argue for the decisive influence of Eckhart on Hegel.¹⁵ Such arguments have been based partly on the fact that we know Hegel to have read Eckhart in the years 1795-9 and 1823-4,¹⁶ but they are mainly based on the striking parallels between Hegel's language and Eckhart's. At one point in the Encyclopedia, Hegel writes "God is God only in so far as He knows himself; this self-knowledge is, further, a self-consciousness in man and man's knowledge of

14. This is actually a "quilt quotation" made up of lines from several of Eckhart's sermons (certainly the reference to "the concept" looks suspiciously like an Hegelian interpolation).

15. Benz, Mystical Sources; Ernst Lichtenstein, "Von Meister Eckhart bis Hegel: Zur philosophischen Entwicklung des deutschen Bildungsbegriff," in Kritik und Metaphysik, ed. Friedrich Kaulbech and Joachim Ritter (Berlin: de Gruyter: 1966), 260-298; Cyril O'Regan, "Hegelian Philosophy of Religion and Eckhartian Mysticism," in New Perspectives on Hegel's Philosophy of Religion, ed. David Kolb (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) and The Heterodox Hegel (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); G. Ralfs, "Lebensformen des Geistes Meister Eckhart und Hegel," in Kant Studien, suppl. no. 86 (1966); W. Schultz, "Der Einfluss der deutschen Mystik auf Hegels Philosophie," in Theologie und Wirklichkeit (Kiel, 1969), 147-177.

16. See O'Regan, "Hegelian Philosophy of Religion and Eckhartian MYsticism," 110; also see H.S. Harris, Hegel's Development, Vol. I: Toward the Sunlight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 230.

God, which becomes man's self-knowledge in God" (PS § 564; Wallace, 298). I shall return to the issue of Hegel's debt to Eckhart in Chapter Seven.

Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) is another figure who cannot accurately be called "Hermetic" but whose influence on the Hermetic tradition was important. He stands also as a transitional figure between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Forgotten by mainstream philosophy until the nineteenth century, Cusa influenced figures in the Hermetic countertradition, such as Giordano Bruno.¹⁷ As a young man, Cusa was educated by the Brothers of the Common Life at Deventer. There, as Ernst Cassirer writes, "for the first time, Cusa was touched by the spirit of German mysticism in all its speculative depth and in its moral and religious force."¹⁸ Gerard Groote, the founder of the Brotherhood, was associated with Ruysbröck, who was profoundly influenced by Eckhart.

Like Eckhart, Cusa would teach that God is the coincidence of opposites. (He was also the first author to refer to God as Absolutum.) Indeed, Cassirer writes that in many places, Cusa seems to do nothing more than "to repeat thoughts that belong to the solid patrimony of medieval mysticism. Cusa constantly refers to the sources of this mysticism, especially to the writings of Meister

17. Beck, 58.

18. Ernst Cassirer, The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, trans. Mario Domandi (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 33.

Eckhart and the Pseudo-Dionysius."¹⁹ Cusa also held the perennial Hermetic-mystical doctrine of "internal relations" (important for German Idealism, with which the term is associated): the view that everything is involved with or connected to everything else. Cusa's theology came very close to pantheism, yet he is most famous for his doctrine of "learned ignorance," which he set forth in a work of the same name (1440). "Learned ignorance" involves knowing that we do not know God, meaning, technically, that we can predicate nothing univocally of God. We can "know" God through a series of contradictory predicates (hence God as "coincidence of opposites"), but this sort of knowledge, of course, seems thoroughly paradoxical to our limited human capacities. For instance, Nicholas asserts in Of Learned Ignorance that God is both Maximum and Minimum: since to be the Maximum is to be everything that can be, in the fullest sense, God as Maximum must also be as small as He can be, and hence Minimum.²⁰ God is also Unity and Plurality, and as such, God must be seen as containing the plurality of existence "contracted" into His oneness. Thus, we find in Cusa a situation quite similar to Eckhart, where the distinction between God and World has been collapsed in the very process of upholding the transcendence or otherness of God. Cassirer writes: "With

19. Ibid., 8.

20. Of Learned Ignorance, trans. Germain Heron (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 12.

the same decisiveness and acuteness that he applied to the idea of 'separation,' Cusa . . . works out the idea of 'participation.' Far from excluding each other, separation and participation, chorismos and methexis, can only be thought of through and in relation to each other."²¹ In Cusa's case, he in fact undermined traditional theology by asserting an infinite distance between God and man, thus making nonsense of any kind of "hierarchical" picture of God, man, and creation.

For Cusa, to say that all things are "contracted" into God means that every individual thing has its meaning or significance with its relation to the whole, and thus, as noted earlier, everything is bound up with and related to everything else. To Cusa, this was equivalent to saying that every individual thing is itself the universe, contracted into one set of relations knitted together at one unique point in the cosmos.²² The parallel to Leibniz's doctrine of Monads is obvious. Cusa also taught that the mind of man is structurally isomorphic with the mind of God. This guarantees, among other things, the efficacy of our mathematical constructions. The major difference between human mens and divine is that while God creates things with His mind, we create images or ideas of things only. God creates an actual world, whereas man creates a mental world, a world of ideas. We can, however,

21. Cassirer, 22.

22. Heron, 82.

through physical labor, bring our ideas to fruition in reality with exactitude, through our use of mathematics. There is, then, an analogy between man and God, and Cusa is not shy about exploiting it, and treating man as a "little God."

In De visione Dei (1453) Cusa takes advantage of the ambiguity of the phrase "the vision of God" to make a truly mystical point, very much in line with what we have seen of Eckhart and the Hermetic tradition. For Cusa, God's vision and our vision of God are one and the same. This is an idea we find in Eckhart: "The same knowing in which God knows Himself is none other than the knowing of each detached spirit."²³ God reveals Himself in a multiplicity of "points of view." What God is can only be approached somehow through an insight into the many individual "thoughts" of or on God, into which God has "specified" Himself. Cassirer writes that in De visione Dei Cusa teaches that "the truth of the universal and the particularity of the individual interpenetrate each other, so that the Divine Being can only be grasped and seen from the infinitely multiple individual points of view."²⁴ Thus our "vision" of God is God's vision of Himself. To open ourselves to the divine is to open ourselves to the particularity through which the divine unfolds.

23. In diebus suis placuit, in Eckhart, Deutsche Werke 1, ed. Josef Quint (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963), 162.

24. Cassirer, 36.

Again, this is the same Hermetic doctrine of God requiring creation, and specifically man, for His actualization. It is the doctrine that flowers fully in the Böhmean-Hegelian theosophy. Lewis White Beck notes in his Early German Philosophy that Cusa's "theory of the polarity but unity of man, God, and nature is elaborated by Schelling (who, we know, was actually influenced by reading Nicholas)."²⁵ Beck also makes the claim that the Naturphilosophie of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as well as theosophy and protestant mysticism, have their roots in Cusa. However, Hegel never mentions Cusa anywhere in his published writings or in his lectures.²⁶

2. Renaissance and Reformation

Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522), also called Capnion, was one of the great figures of the Renaissance in Germany. Reuchlin was a Swabian--a fact which Hegel himself was careful to note--who had studied in Italy and made the acquaintance of Pico della Mirandola. He subsequently became a Christian Kabbalist and did even more than Pico to

25. Beck, 71.

26. David Walsh notes that although there is no evidence that Hegel ever read Cusa, he was indirectly influenced by him through J.G. Hamann and Giordano Bruno. See David Walsh, The Esoteric Origins of Modern Ideological Thought: Böhme and Hegel (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1978), 326. See also Josef Stallmach, "Das Absolute und die Dialektik bei Cusanus im Vergleich zu Hegel," Scholastik 39 (1964): 495-509.

promote study of the Kabbalah in the Christian world. Reuchlin's first Kabbalist work, De verbo mirifico, appeared in 1494. His De arte Cabalistica (1517) was the first in-depth study of the Kabbalah by a gentile author. As Joseph Blau has written, "from Reuchlin's time no writer who touched on cabalism with any thoroughness did so without using him as a source."²⁷ During the twenty-three years that separated Reuchlin's two major works, many more Kabbalist treatises had come to light, which Reuchlin was able to utilize in writing De arte Cabalistica. Reuchlin was a true scholar of the Renaissance, well-versed in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Both of these works are written in the form of dialogues between three participants. Set at an inn in Frankfurt, De arte Cabalistica recounts the conversation of Philolaus, a Pythagorean, Marranus, a Muslim, and Simon ben Eleazar, a Kabbalist. At one point, Simon speaks of Kabbalah as "an alchemy transforming external perceptions into internal, then into images, opinion, reason, intuition, spirit, and, finally, light."²⁸

As Frances Yates points out, the presence of Philolaus the Pythagorean seems intended to point to the significance of number: "Pico in his Mathematical Conclusions had stated that 'By number a way may be had for the investigation and

27. Joseph Leon Blau, The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 60.

28. G. Mallery Masters, "Renaissance Kabbalah" in Modern Esoteric Spirituality, ed. Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 142.

understanding of everything possible to be known.' In his mind the Mathematical Conclusions supported the Cabalist Conclusions," and Reuchlin followed Pico in this.²⁹

Reuchlin's work not only did much to increase study of the Kabbalah, it also provoked a reaction from anti-semites. Lead by Johann Pfefferkorn, a converted Jew, the attack made Reuchlin a cause celebre with learned men throughout Europe. Yates writes that "The importance of Cabala in Pico della Mirandola's synthesis, the fame of which spread with Neoplatonism, showed that Christian Cabala was a most necessary element at the heart of the New Learning; and that the new Hebrew studies were as vital for the Renaissance scholar as the new Greek studies."³⁰ In his Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Hegel praises Reuchlin for singlehandedly rescuing Hebrew philosophy from the flames: "There was in hand a project to destroy all Hebrew books in Germany by an imperial decree; Reuchlin deserves great credit for having prevented this" (LHP III, 113; Werke 20, 15). Reuchlin's vision of a congruity between the Greek, Jewish and Muslim traditions would become a cornerstone of Hermetic thought in the next two centuries, especially as espoused by the Rosicrucian movement.

29. Frances Yates, The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 25.

30. Ibid., 26.

The same year that De arte Cabalistica was published, Luther nailed his "Ninety-five theses" to the Castle church door at Wittenberg on October 31 or November 1. The Catholic church could not be said to have taken a particularly tolerant stand toward the new Hermetic learning (as the cases of Pico and Bruno and others illustrate), and the Lutherans were little better. During the sixteenth century, Lutheranism was a considerable impediment to the dissemination of Hermetic philosophy in Germany, but it spread widely nonetheless. Luther himself, although he rejected mystical "excesses," incorporated vivid quasi-mystical imagery in his sermons. Commenting on Luther's condemnation of Aristotle for rejecting Plato's theory of Ideas, Lewis White Beck writes, "Only if Plato is thought of in terms of Neoplatonism, and Neoplatonism is seen through the eyes of Christian mystics, is such a strange judgement intelligible at all in a man like Luther."³¹ Oddly enough, Luther had nothing but praise for alchemy:

The science of alchemy I like very well, indeed, it is truly the natural philosophy of the ancients. I like it not only for the many uses it has in decorating metals and in distilling and subliming herbs and

31. Beck, 93; see Luther, Heidelberg Disputation, Thesis 36, Early Theological Writings, trans. James Atkinson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 281.

liquors, but also for the sake of the allegory and secret signification, which is exceedingly fine, touching the resurrection of the dead at the Last Day. For, as in a furnace the fire retracts and separates from a substance the other portions, and carries upward the spirit, the life, the sap, the strength, while the unclean matter, the dregs, remain at the bottom, like a dead and worthless carcass . . . even so God, at the day of judgement, will separate all things through fire, and righteous from the ungodly.³²

Still, Luther's followers were not entirely pleased with the next major figure of German Hermeticism, Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, called Paracelsus (1493-1541). Alchemy, whether in its practical or mystical form, flourished in Germany, and Paracelsus is definitely the most significant figure in the history of German alchemy. In his own time Paracelsus's name became inseparably linked with alchemy, and his doctrines, as well as others often erroneously attributed to him, exercised a great influence over esoteric philosophy in Germany. Heinrich Schneider writes that, "Beginning with Paracelsus, the line of the German development led by the way of Valentin Weigel to a mysticism seeking to embrace the whole

32. Quoted in J.W. Montgomery, "Cross, Constellation, and Crucible: Lutheran Astrology and Alchemy in the Age of Reformation," Ambix 11 (1963): 65-86.

of cosmos and nature; Böhme, who had found the way prepared in Gnosis, Neo-platonism, and Cabala, strove to carry it forward to an all-encompassing concept of God."³³ Hegel drew on Paracelsus in composing his Philosophy of Nature, though in the Lectures on the History of Philosophy he compares him unfavorably with Böhme, stating that Paracelsus was "much more confused, and without Böhme's profundity of mind" (LHP III, 191; Werke 20, 94). I shall discuss Paracelsus more fully in Chapter Six.

Of almost equal importance with Paracelsus was Henricus Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535). Agrippa is most famous for his massive work The Occult Philosophy (De occulta philosophia), written sometime after 1510 and published in 1533. The Occult Philosophy was an attempt at a complete synthesis of Hermetic philosophy, alchemy, and Kabbalah (Agrippa had read Reuchlin). Agrippa offered his work as a remedy for the "chaotic" state of learning in his day--in short, his Occult Philosophy was to be a realization of the pansophic idea of a "super science." Prior to its publication, in 1530, Agrippa published The Vanity of the Sciences (De vanitate scientiarum). In this work, Agrippa presents himself as a sceptic, launching arguments against the possibility of any knowledge and the efficacy of any of the sciences,

33. Heinrich Schneider, Quest for Mysteries: The Masonic Background for Literature in Eighteenth-Century Germany (Ithaca: Cornell, 1947), 81.

including the occult sciences. The Vanity of the Sciences was widely read by humanists, and exercised an influence on Montaigne, among others.³⁴ Three years later, however, Agrippa would publish The Occult Philosophy, arguing for Kabbalah as a prisca theologia and for the power of magic based on Kabbalah. Could Agrippa simply have changed his mind? This is certainly a possible explanation, but not a very satisfying one. As Frances Yates suggests in Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, Agrippa probably suppressed The Occult Philosophy for twenty-three years because he realized, quite rightly, that its doctrine would be considered dangerous by many. Agrippa's reputation as a "black magician," which reached ridiculous extremes after his death, is testament to the legitimacy of his concern. In the interim, he published The Vanity of the Sciences as, perhaps, a kind of "safety device": if anyone challenged him on the contents of The Occult Philosophy he could always point to the arguments of The Vanity of the Sciences and insist that he was a mere chronicler of occult lore, and did not mean to be taken seriously.³⁵ In other words,

34. Beck, 142.

35. Yates, Giordano Bruno, 131; As Andrew Weeks points out, Agrippa published a revised version of The Occult Philosophy just two years prior to his death. See Weeks, German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 123.

The Vanity of the Sciences was Agrippa's "exoteric doctrine."³⁶

Agrippa received his "Hermetic education" in Italy, under the tutelage of scholars trained in the traditions of Pico and Ficino. As Frances Yates reports in The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age, in Italy Agrippa made the acquaintance of Cardinal Egidius of Viterbo and of Agostino Ricci, both of whom were interested in using Christian Kabbalah to advance the Catholic reform movement. Through them and others Agrippa had access to much of the Kabbalist literature.³⁷ As Yates notes, Agrippa's The Occult Philosophy "belongs to the tradition of Christian Kabbalah, because it leads up, in the third book on the supercelestial world, to the presentation of the Name of Jesus as now all-powerful, containing all the powers of the Tetragrammaton [the four-letter Hebrew name of God], 'as is confirmed by Hebrews and Cabalists skilled in the Divine Names.'³⁸

In the first two chapters of The Occult Philosophy, Agrippa lays out his tripartite division of reality into

36. John Trithemius, abbot of Saint James of Heroipolis, wrote to Agrippa in 1510: "this one rule I advise you to observe, that you communicate vulgar secrets to vulgar friends, but higher and secret to higher, and secret friends only. Give hay to an ox, sugar to a parrot only; understand my meaning, lest you be trod under oxen's feet, as oftentimes happens." See Agrippa, The Occult Philosophy, trans. by James Freake (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995), lvii. I have altered the translation.

37. Yates, Occult Philosophy, 39.

38. Ibid., 37.

(from highest to lowest) the Intellectual World, the Celestial World, and the Elemental world. Each receives influences from the one above it, and through magic we can move upward from the elemental world to God, who exists beyond the Intellectual World. The procedure for this upward movement to the divine (which entails, as one might expect, the divinization of man) is divided by Agrippa into three categories of sciences, corresponding to the three worlds:

Elemental World -- medicine and natural philosophy

Celestial World -- astrology and mathematics

Intellectual World -- studies of the ceremonies of the religions

Agrippa thus divides The Occult Philosophy into three major sections: Natural Magic (based on a quasi-Aristotelian physics), Celestial Magic (based on a Pythagoreanized mathematics), and Ceremonial Magic (based in what Agrippa calls "theology"). Like alchemy, Agrippa's magic is both an art and a philosophy.

The theory of "Natural Magic" is founded on the doctrine of the four elements. Agrippa draws on Ficino's De vita coelitus comparanda (1489) for his account of the occult virtues, which are inculcated in things through the rays of the stars, communicating the influences of Ideas

from the "World Soul." Agrippa then explains how we can use our knowledge of this world-system to manipulate occult sympathies. There follows much material concerning the preparation of what often goes under the name of "spells": poisons, magical perfumes, love philtres, etc. Agrippa discusses magical "words of power," particularly Hebrew words and their letters, at the end of the book on "Natural Magic."

Agrippa divides "Celestial Magic" into arithmetic, music, geometry, optics, astronomy, and mechanics. He accepts the Pythagorean claim about the higher reality of number, and thus ranks Celestial Magic higher than Natural Magic, which concerns mundane, earthly objects. Basically, Agrippa's Celestial Magic is a kind of numerology, in which the adept exploits certain numerical correspondences between things. Agrippa gives an account of the symbolic and magical significance of the numbers from one to twelve. He also includes a discussion of gematria, the science of attaining wisdom and occult prowess through the substitution of numbers for the letters in words of power.³⁹ For this practice, Hebrew is the most powerful language. There is nothing here that is original with Agrippa: Kabbalists had for centuries practiced gematria, the most famous of them being Abraham Abulafia (1240-ca.

39. J.L. Blau discusses Reuchlin's use of gematria. See Blau, The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance, 8.

1291). There follows an account of the use of celestial images or symbols in magic, primarily in the preparation of talismans. The images--of the planets, zodiacal signs, and even demons--were to be engraved on certain specially-prepared objects and then "activated" through magic which can be practiced only by a highly-developed adept, who becomes thereby a "co-operator" with God and can "do all things."⁴⁰ We are again confronted with the Hermetic doctrine of man's "divinization," which we have seen in Pico, Bruno, Eckhart, and others.

The highest level of magic, however, Agrippa reserves for the third book of The Occult Philosophy. "Ceremonial Magic" is a practical Kabbalah designed to give the adept divine powers to invoke and manipulate demons and spiritual guides. Ceremonial Magic is primarily an intellectual affair: the adept must first be "purified"; he must live an ascetic and religious life. Then, he must acquire knowledge of the structure of the intelligible world. Agrippa derives much of his account of this structure from the Kabbalah. He gives the names of the Sephiroth and their significance, and relates each to the angelic powers. Agrippa accepts the standard Hermetic microcosm-macrocosm analogy, and so his account of the intelligible structure of the cosmos is also an account of the structure of man.

40. Quoted in Yates, Giordano Bruno, 136.

Thus, to master the occult philosophy and become an adept is to attain self-knowledge.

Agrippa had a far-flung influence, but led a singularly unhappy life and in death was excoriated as an evil necromancer. The legendary character of Doctor Faustus, as well as the tale of the "sorcerer's apprentice" were based on him. In 1567, many years after Agrippa's death, a fourth book of De occulta philosophia, "Of Magical Ceremonies," was published, claiming to be a key to the previous three books. It was denounced by Agrippa's pupil Johann Wierus as spurious, and most scholars have accepted that judgement. Curiously, we know from the auction catalog of Hegel's library that Hegel possessed a copy of that work.⁴¹

One of the major thinkers influenced by Agrippa was Giordano Bruno. Bruno sojourned for a time in Germany, holding a university professorship in Wittenberg from 1586 to 1588. Bruno claimed to have founded a sect among the Lutherans there which he called the "Giordanisti." It was one of the happier times in his life, and Bruno left with nothing but praise for Wittenberg. In his farewell speech to the faculty, Bruno presented his own "genealogy of wisdom." The first "temple of wisdom," Bruno claimed, was erected by the Egyptians and Chaldeans. It was "re-built"

41. Berzeichniss der von dem Professor Herrn Dr. Hegel und dem Dr. herrn Seebeck hinterlassen Bücher-Sammlungen (Berlin, 1832). In the collection of the Stadtsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

by the Persian magi under Zoroaster, then again by the Indian "gymnosophists," then by the Thracians under Orpheus, then by the Greek wisemen (Thales and others), then by the Italians (including Lucretius). Finally, Bruno claimed, the temple of wisdom would be rebuilt a seventh time by the Germans (which no doubt pleased his audience).⁴²

Bruno wrote his Lampas triginta statuarum (ca. 1586-1588)) while in Wittenberg. It is an attempt to extend the magical memory system which was the major project of his life, and which Frances Yates describes in her book on Bruno. The mnemotechnic art of memory was of ancient origin and originally had little or no occult connotation. However, in the Renaissance it became integrated into the new Hermetic philosophy, as discussed in detail by Yates in another work, The Art of Memory. It was thought that the techniques of ars memoria could be used to reawaken the adept's latent knowledge of the structure of the cosmos and the nature of the occult influences. The structure of Bruno's memory system was set out in his first work, De Umbris Idearum (1548) and remained basically constant throughout his career. The goal of this system was self-transformation, self-actualization: the adept who "reclected" the cosmic forces described by Bruno would acquire a new, integrated and powerful personality.

42. Oratio valedictoria, Wittenberg 1588; quoted in Yates, Giordano Bruno, 247.

Lampas triginta statuarum gives an account of two "triads" of archetypes. The lower triad consists of three "infigurables": Chaos, Orchus (Abyss or Need), and Nox (daughter of Orchus). These are infigurable because they cannot be imagined; they may only be understood conceptually. The "supernal triad," however, is imaginable. It consists of the Father (mind), Son (primal intellect) and Light (spirit of all things). Frances Yates argues that this latter triad has its origins in the Corpus Hermeticum.⁴³ Bruno's stay in Wittenberg resulted in a lasting influence of his memory system on German Hermeticism. In any case, I will suggest in Chapter Three that Hegel was influenced by Bruno's tradition of "memory magic."

I will close this section with a brief account of two lesser, but still influential figures in German mysticism: Sebastian Franck and Valentin Weigel. Luther referred to Sebastian Franck (1499-1542/3) as "the devil's most cherished slanderous mouth."⁴⁴ Franck was essentially a pantheist who held God to be immanent in nature. Like many mystics, he taught that man is imbued with an ember of the divine personality. However, Franck held the unusual position that God just is what He reveals Himself to be, under different aspects in the spiritual lives of individual men. "God is for us," Franck contends, "just as

43. Ibid., 310.

44. Quoted in Beck, 149.

we represent him."⁴⁵ Beck remarks that "Franck's ontology of mind and spirit is not sufficiently developed for him to know, or for us to be sure, that he is here adumbrating a thesis of later transcendental philosophy . . . He does not and could not work this out; but his philosophical heir is Schelling . . . "⁴⁶ The presence of God within us is a "natural light" which Franck calls Spirit. He makes a distinction between what he calls the Church "visible" and "invisible." The "Invisible Church" is constituted by the Holy Spirit, through the loving hearts of all men. This conception of the "Invisible Church", stated here by Franck for perhaps the first time, will later be important for the Rosicrucians and Freemasons, and for their intellectual heirs, Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel.

Valentin Weigel (1533-1588), in the words of Antoine Faivre, "effected a fusion of the Rheinisch-Flemish mystical tradition with the down-to-earth thinking of Paracelsus."⁴⁷ Weigel held a theory of mystical enlightenment that was not unlike that of Buddhism. According to Weigel, in order to receive divine illumination, we must clear our minds of confusion and concern with the travails of everyday living. This is necessary, he holds, because the mind is not passive, but active in its awareness of the world. Weigel holds that

45. Paradoxa (1534); quoted in Beck p. 151

46. Beck, 151.

47. Antoine Faivre, Access to Western Esotericism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 63.

colors, as well as the form of space are contributed by the mind to experience.⁴⁸ He presents his proto-Kantian theory of knowledge in his work The Shortest Way to Knowledge of All Things Without Error (published posthumously in 1617). The mental restraint necessary to achieve knowledge of God involves pure consciousness or self-knowing, not a knowledge of particular things. In being absolutely passive, however, it is absolutely active, for this type of knowledge is precisely God's knowledge (Weigel conceives God as the "Nothing and All"). So, the mystic does not come to know God but to become God's knowing. This, as we have seen, is a perennial Hermetic theme. Also present in Weigel, as indicated by the title of his major work, is the ideal of wisdom as a knowledge of all things, as well as the conception of the "invisible church" first put forward by Franck.

3. Jakob Böhme

Jakob Böhme (1575-1624) began to write just before the publication of the first Rosicrucian manifestoes. He was a native of Görlitz, in Lusatia on the borders of Bohemia. Böhme was a simple shoemaker who, in 1600 had a mystical vision: looking at a gleam of light reflected on a pewter vessel, he felt himself able to peer into the inner essence of all things. In a letter, he described the experience:

48. Beck, 153.

"The gate was opened unto me, so that in one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at a University; at which I did exceedingly admire, and I knew not how it happened to me; and thereupon I turned my heart to praise God for it. For I saw and knew the Being of all beings; . . . also the birth or eternal generation of the Holy Trinity; the descent and origin of this world."⁴⁹

For twelve years he remained silent, and when he did write for the first time in 1612, it was only a personal exercise; he never intended his work to be copied and read by others. During the intervening years, there is evidence that Böhme read the alchemists, especially Paracelsus. In Böhme's first work, Aurora (Morgenröthe im Aufgang), he both denies and claims expertise in alchemical theory in the same passage: "Do not take me for an alchemist, for I write only in the knowledge of the spirit, and not from experience. Though indeed I could here show something else, viz. in how many days, and in what hours, these things must be prepared; for gold cannot be made in one day, but a whole month is requisite for it."⁵⁰ Andrew

49. Jakob Böhme, letter to Caspar Lindner, in Jakob Böhme: Essential Readings, ed. Robin Waterfield (Wellingborough, England: Crucible/Thorsens, 1989), 64.

50. Aurora, ch. 22, § 105; Aurora, trans. John Sparrow, ed. C.J. Barker and D.S. Hehner (Edmonds, WA.: Holmes Publishing, 1992), 610. Sparrow's translation was originally published in 1656. It is the only English translation of the entire work. I have included page numbers from Sparrow, because his paragraph numbers do not correspond to those in the German.

Weeks speculates that Böhme did actually experiment with alchemy, perhaps with one of his wealthy friends.⁵¹ Boehme was also acquainted with the writings of the mystics (e.g., Weigel), and possibly some Kabbalistic works.⁵²

The Reformation had not satisfied the deeper religious needs of many of the faithful. The result was a new flowering of mysticism in Germany, of which Böhme's theosophy is the most profound and impressive product. Böhme's Görlitz was, as Pierre Deghaye puts it, "rich in spiritual heterodoxy and Hermeticism."⁵³ The medical doctors of Görlitz were mainly practioners of Paracelsian medicine. There was even a minor scandal over their Paracelsianism which erupted in 1570.⁵⁴ This scandal only increased the appetite of the citizens, particularly of the nobility, for Hermetic and alchemical philosophy, in which they were widely known to dabble. Supernatural events were frequently reported in or near Görlitz: giant meteors

51. Weeks, Jacob Böhme, 57; H.H. Brinton has remarked that "Böhme did more than borrow a large part of his vocabulary from alchemy, he took over the whole alchemistic world-view, which he developed into a philosophic system." See Brinton, The Mystic Will (London, 1931), 81.

52. The influence of Kabbalah on Böhme's works seems to increase with time. Ernst Benz believes that Böhme's sources for Kabbalism were probably oral. Benz, Mystical Sources, 48.

53. Pierre Deghaye, "Jacob Böhme and His Followers" in Modern Esoteric Spirituality, 210.

54. Andrew Weeks, Böhme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 29.

crashed to earth at propitious times, grain was said to rain from the sky, etc.⁵⁵

One important influence on the underground Hermetic culture of Görlitz was Dr. Balthasar Walter, a Christian Kabbalist and alchemist who befriended Böhme after 1612. Walter had travelled to the Orient in search of wisdom, but declared that he had found it only with Böhme. It is through Walter that Böhme probably first became deeply immersed in the Kabbalah. Another influential acquaintance of Böhme was Dr. Tobias Kober, a Paracelsian physician, who may have been the source of Böhme's Paracelsianism.⁵⁶ Another friend was the alchemist Johann Rothe, who was well-versed in medieval mysticism, including Tauler.⁵⁷

David Walsh sees Böhme as a turning point in the history of Hermetic philosophy. Hermeticism and Christianity had always been strange bedfellows, and, as we have seen, much of Hermetic thought--such as its conception of the divine or semi-divine status of man--is heretical by Christian standards. As Frances Yates has argued, Bruno went so far as to advocate the abandonment of Christianity altogether and the return to a Hermetic, "Egyptian" religion.⁵⁸ Walsh sees Böhme as acting to prevent the breakup of Hermetic philosophy in the face of its clear

55. Ibid., 31.

56. John Joseph Stoudt, Sunrise to Eternity: A Study in Jacob Böhme's Life and Thought (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), 95.

57. Ibid., 95.

58. Frances Yates, Giordano Bruno

conflict with the dominant, orthodox faith: "For the new occult philosophy to work, the old Christian philosophy must be redirected. The individual with the theoretical genius to effect their reconciliation and, thereby, become the transmitter of the new symbolism to the modern world was Jakob Böhme."⁵⁹

Walsh summarizes the radical "redirection" of Christian philosophy, and the key to Böhme's thought, as follows: "The crucial shift is from the idea of all reality as moving toward God to the idea of God himself as part of the movement of reality as well."⁶⁰ This is Böhme's innovation--although it is approached by others in the Hermetic tradition--to conceive God not as transcendent and static, existing "outside" the world, impassive and complete, but as an active process unfolding within the world, within history. What moves this process or initiates it in the first place? Böhme's answer not only shows the radicality of his theology, but his psychological insight as well. Böhme held that God is moved by the desire to reveal Himself to Himself, but that this self-

59. David Walsh, "A Mythology of Reason: The Persistence of Pseudo-Science in the Modern World," in Science, Pseudo-Science, and Utopianism in Early Modern Thought, ed. Stephen McKnight (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 151.

60. Ibid., 152; Jürgen Habermas has remarked that Böhme was the first to "historicize" God or the Absolute; i.e., to claim that it develops through time. See Habermas's Das Absolute und die Geschichte: Von der Zweispältigkeit in Schellings Denken (Bonn: Ph.D. dissertation, Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms Universität, 1954), 2.

revelation is psychologically impossible unless an other stands opposed to God.⁶¹

In a later work, Böhme wrote, "No thing can be revealed to itself without opposition [Widerwärtigkeit]: For if there is nothing that opposes it, then it always goes out of itself and never returns to itself again. If it does not return into itself, as into that from which it originated, then it knows nothing of its origin."⁶² In short, the "other" is necessary for God's self-consciousness. Without self-consciousness God would not be God, for His knowledge would be incomplete. This other "limits" God; by "othering," God limits Himself, giving Himself discernible "boundaries." Although it is not clear that Böhme thinks God exists at all apart from creation, the mind can think Him apart, can think Him as transcendent--but as transcendent God is merely a "dark inchoate will for self-revelation"⁶³ which Böhme calls the

61. To borrow terms from Gershom Scholem's treatment of Isaac Luria, Böhme's theosophy conceives God as "macro-anthropos" and man as "micro-cosmos." See Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (New York: Schocken Books, 1946), 269. Also, recall Corpus Hermeticum X: "we must dare to say that the human on earth is a mortal god but that god in heaven is an immortal human."

62. See Jakob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1955-61) Vom Göttlicher Beschaulichkeit, vol. 4, ch. 1, para. 8. Hegel quotes this passage in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy III, 203; Werke 20, 106.

63. Walsh, "A Mythology of Reason," 154.

Ungrund (a conception not far removed from Eckhart's Abgrund, or Abyss).⁶⁴

God does not know Himself through the world qua absolute other, however. An absolute other would be so foreign as to be unknowable. Instead, God in creation "others Himself," corporealizes Himself, a process which reaches its consummation with Christ. It is through Christ that the nature of God and the world is revealed as a teaching to man. Through Christ, we can reflect on the nature of our nature as divine products, and this reflection constitutes a "return" to the source; God's will to self-revelation is fulfilled with His creation's knowledge of Him. As Walsh puts it succinctly, "Böhme is the herald of the self-actualizing evolutionary God."⁶⁵ And F. Ernest Stoeffler writes, "To Böhme God was that ultimate Mystery which moves deliberately and constantly toward self-understanding through progressive self-actualization. Philosophy, then, as Böhme understood it, becomes basically the history of the ultimate Mystery striving to know itself."⁶⁶

Böhme's first work, which came to be known simply as Aurora, was titled Morgenröthe im Aufgang, which Weeks

64. The term Ungrund seems to appear first in Böhme's treatise, "On the Incarnation of Christ."

65. David Walsh The Mysticism of Innerwordly Fulfillment: A Study of Jacob Böhme (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1983), 1.

66. F. Ernest Stoeffler, German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), 110.

translates as "Morning Glow, Ascending." The work carried an elaborate subtitle as well:

The Root or Mother
of PHILOSOPHY, ASTROLOGY and THEOLOGY
from the True Ground
or
A Description of Nature

- I. How All was and came to be in the Beginning.
- II. How Nature and the Elements are become Creaturely.
- III. Also of the Two Qualities Evil and Good.
- IV. From whence all things had their Origin.
- V. And how all stand and work at present.
- VI. Also, how all will be at the End of Time.
- VII. Also what is the Condition of the Kingdom of God, and of the Kingdom of Hell.
- VIII. And how men work and act creaturely in Each of them.

All this set down diligently from a true Ground in the Knowledge of the Spirit, and in the impulse of God.⁶⁷

The Preface to Aurora employs the metaphor of the "tree of revealed truth," which is a kind of intellectual history leading up to Luther and the Reformation. Böhme includes himself in his metaphor, claiming that before the tree is

67. Aurora, title page; trans. Sparrow.

at last consumed by fire, it will sprout one final branch, a final and consummate revelation of the truth of the tree, from its root. As Böhme writes later in Aurora, "this book is the first sprouting or vegetation of this twig, which springs or grows green in its mother, and is as a child that is learning to walk, and is not able to run apace at the first."⁶⁸ Böhme refers explicitly to his thought as theosophy.

Aurora's outlook might appear at first glance to be pantheistic, even proto-Spinozistic. Böhme writes in the second chapter: "In the Holy Ghost alone, who is in God, and also in the whole nature, out of which all things were made, in Him alone can you search into the whole body or corporeity of God, which is nature; as also into the Holy Trinity itself."⁶⁹ And: "But here you must elevate your mind in the spirit, and consider how the whole nature, with all the powers which are in nature, also the wideness, depth and height, also heaven and earth, and all whatsoever is therein, and all that is above the heavens, is together the body or corporeity of God; and the powers of the stars are the fountain veins in the natural body of God in this world."⁷⁰ This is not pantheism, however. It is Hermeticism in its classical form, just as I described it in opposition to pantheism in the Introduction: what is

68. Aurora 21, § 63 (Sparrow, 563).

69. Aurora 2, § 12 (Sparrow, 53).

70. Aurora ch. 2, § 16 (Sparrow, 55-56).

claimed is not that all the things in the world are divine or are "full of gods," but that the world as a whole is a part of God's being. Nature is the "body of God," but God is more than just body.

Just as Hegel will, and as Eckhart did before him, Böhme reads the second person of the Trinity, the "Son," as equivalent to Nature. This is unusual enough in Hegel, but in an untutored seventeenth-century shoemaker it is quite radical indeed. Böhme writes: "But the Father everywhere generates the Son out of all his powers" ⁷¹ In Chapter Sixteen, Böhme speaks of the deity being "continually generated" (immer geboren). ⁷² Weeks writes that, "The synthesis attempted in Aurora, and even more nearly achieved in the second book [Description of the Three Principles of God's Essence (Beschreibung der drey Principien Göttliches Wesens; 1619)] aims at showing that spirit is a vital substrate of elemental matter, latent in the element. Since God creates nature not out of nothing but rather out of His own being, the indivisible divine life of the spirit is entirely present at every level, in every suborganism, in macrocosm and microcosm, within every circle of the world." ⁷³

I wish now to proceed to the details of Böhme's theory of divine self-manifestation, as it develops throughout his

71. Aurora ch. 7, § 43 (Sparrow, 138).

72. Aurora ch. 16 § 12 (Sparrow, 412).

73. Weeks, Jacob Böhme, 64.

writings, in Aurora and beyond. Recall that an "other" must be opposed to God in order to activate this process, but that this other is in some sense a product of God. It is referred to by Böhme as the "mirror" of God (recall Eckhart's mirror, and Hildegard's many mirrors). The mirror reflects God back to Himself, but it is not identifiable with God as hidden or unmanifest God. It might be thought, based on the foregoing, that the mirror is simply nature. This is in one sense correct. A mirror, obviously, presents an image to the gazer but the mirror and its image are distinct from the gazer. Taking nature, or creation, as the mirror of God, Böhme holds that in some sense everything is a symbol or an image of God. Certain corporeal existences, however, reveal themselves to be primordial symbols, which can give us an insight into God and His creation.

This idea is generally referred to by Böhme as God's Wisdom (Sophia). Wisdom is the thought of God, though not an abstract thought. Wisdom is the thought of God manifested in images; "Wisdom is the imagination of God."⁷⁴ This is necessary for Böhme, because, as stated in the earlier quotations from Aurora, what God projects in his creative will to self-revelation is in fact his corporealization. Basarab Nicolescu states that in Böhme "the divine imagination is the absolute matrix of all form,

74. Deghaye, 224.

the starting point of all manifestation . . . True imagination as the source of reality is a key idea in Böhme's cosmology."⁷⁵ In short, the products of God, including God's Wisdom qua posit of God, must have sensuous form. By contrast, Hegel treats his Logic as laying out the thoughts of God, but he seems to want to deal only with a thought stripped of images (in fact, Hegel's views are more complicated than this, as will become apparent later).

Similar to gnostic conceptions of the logos, Böhme's Wisdom is conceived as active.⁷⁶ It is the source of the further specifications of God's corporeality. Further, Böhme's Wisdom is conceived metaphorically as female.⁷⁷ For Böhme, God's desire for self-manifestation echoes throughout creation as a desire inherent in all things. Like God qua Ungrund (which, in proto-Hegelian language, Böhme describes as God "in Himself"), each thing is first merely an egoistic, infantile desire to exist for itself, but then this gives way to a desire for self-awareness. Böhme analyzes God's Wisdom--which is simultaneously the thought of God, the process of creation and the essence of created nature--into a seven-fold cycle of desire.⁷⁸ In

75. Basarab Nicolescu, Science, Meaning and Evolution: The Cosmology of Jacob Böhme, trans. Rob Baker (New York: Parabola Books, 1991), 53-55.

76. Deghaye, 224.

77. Böhme may have been influenced here by the Kabbalistic conception of Shekinah, which is the tenth Sephirah. Shekinah is conceived as female and containing all the other Sephiroth in herself as in a body.

78. Walsh writes that the seven spirits in Böhme correspond "to the last seven Sefiroth [of the Kabbalah] which

God, these seven are as one, but our limited human capacities require us to know God and creation in a piecemeal (stückweise) fashion.

As Weeks notes, "Böhme followed the alchemists of his time in counting his spirits seven. Ruland's Lexicon Alchemiae (published in 1612, based on earlier sources) named seven spiritus chemiae and subdivided them into four principles and three secundarii compositi. All were identified with colors and substances."⁷⁹ Böhme's account of the seven source spirits--their order, their relationships, even their names--varies from work to work. In addition to referring to them as "source spirits" (Quellgeister), Böhme also calls them "properties" (Eigenschaften), "qualities" (Qualitäten), and "forms" (Gestalten). The following is a kind of amalgamation of the various accounts, following Aurora most closely.

Böhme's seven "source spirits" are Sour, Sweet, Bitter, Heat, Love, Tone, and Body. All of these spirits are "contained" within God qua Ungrund, in potentia. God in the Ungrund is both Alles and Nichts. The first three spirits--Sour, Sweet, and Bitter--form a primordial Trinity of conflict within the Godhead, preceding its manifestation. They are a triad of the unmanifest God or God-in-Himself. Sour (Herb) is a

exemplify the order of the cosmos." Walsh, Böhme and Hegel, 84-85.

79. Weeks, Jacob Böhme, 73.

negative force, a "cold fire,"⁸⁰ the will of God to remain unmanifest, unrevealed. This is the first stage of desire, as described above: a primitive, egoistic will to self-assertion without self-reflection. But opposed to Sour there is Sweet (Süss): a positive force that contrasts with sourness as expansion, or opening outward, contrasts with contraction, or inwardness. Sour is a "pull" to remain in-itself, unmanifest; Sweet is a "push" to exteriorize, go out and become for-itself. Sour is the "Eternal No"; Sweet is the "Eternal Yes." Sour is a pucker; sweet is a kiss. The third source-spirit, Bitter (Bitter) is a kind of compromise: a going-out that preserves and seeks identity. Bitter reconciles Sour and Sweet because it is the being of a being which freely gives itself or opens out, but simultaneously collects and preserves its manifestations as the revealed aspects of one identical being.

This triad is referred to by Böhme as a "wheel of anguish."⁸¹ Böhme at times identifies it with the Holy Trinity, with the Paracelsian triad of Salt, Mercury and Sulphur, and he conceives it as Hell. Basarab Nicolescu refers to it as the "death of God to Himself inasmuch as He is the God of pure transcendence."⁸² The "wheel of anguish" is, in fact, the birth of God. In Mysterium

80. "Cold fire," as Julius Evola points out, is an alchemical term. See Julius Evola, The Hermetic Tradition, trans. E.E. Rehmus (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1995), 37.

81. Mysterium Magnum (1623), ch. 3, para. 11.

82. Nicolescu, 29.

Magnum, Böhme refers to God before this process, God qua Ungrund, as "the dark nature" and states that "in the dark nature he is not called God."⁸³

The triad Sour-Sweet-Bitter describes the birth of the living God, the birth of life itself, and the fundamental nature of all living beings. Sour-Sweet-Bitter gives way to Heat (Hitze). Heat is vitality, the soon-to-be-living force that has arisen through the conflict of Sour-Sweet-Bitter. It is the first and most basic outward (that is, worldly) manifestation of the conflict of God in-Himself. It is as if Böhme conceives of Sour-Sweet-Bitter as rubbing up against one another, giving rise to Heat. This Heat then gives way to what Böhme calls the Flash (Schrack). The Flash is not one of the source spirits. Instead, it is literally the force of the preceding four spirits taken together: it is the ignition produced by their activity, and it is life and real being, burgeoning, growing, now separated, externalized, leading on to other things-- "positive" and "external" things.⁸⁴

The Flash is a will to the creation of self-revealing essence--a determinate nature which is open, not closed, to itself--for which Böhme uses the alchemical designation Tinctur. The first four spirits taken together constitute a kind of vector of manifestation. Picture a lightning

83. Mysterium Magnum, ch. 7, para. 14.

84. Hegel refers to it in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy as the "Absolute Generator" (das absolut Gebärende) (LHP III, 208; Werke 20, 111).

flash, consisting of the four in dynamic interaction.⁸⁵

The Flash also represents mystical vision of the kind Böhme had in 1600: the invisible world is illuminated to the mystic in this Flash.

What the flash produces is a "hot fire," which Böhme calls Love (Liebe). Heat, the warmth of exteriorized life, is not inert, nor even stable (yet). It is still a seeking, it is Love. What began as a drive towards manifestation continues. Love is the Tinctur in which all the preceding spirits are united in joyful ecstasy. This is an externalization seeking fulfillment--it is an individuation through self-manifestation. Love's desire is for complete illumination, display, representation to itself. This seeking (Love) issues in a phenomenon which is a kind of "eject" of the seeking--a kind of significant epiphenomenon. This is Sound or Tone (Schall or Ton). As separate from Love, but as a product of Love, Tone has the potential of making Love manifest to itself. Love manifest to itself is the completion of the cycle.

It can easily be seen already that the spirits are not absolutely separate from one another, but, to use Hegelian language, are "moments" of a whole. Tone is the "song of Love;" Love is the desire for fulfillment energized by the Flash, ignited by Heat; Heat is the energy produced by the

85. In Kabbalah, a lightning flash is often spoken of as "zigzagging" its way through the ten sephiroth of the "Tree of Life," representing the process of emanation.

unity in opposition of Sour and Sweet within Bitter. With Tone, the life of God (and the life of life) is ready for fulfillment: having given rise to a "speech" or "expression" of itself (Tone), the process becomes a thing definite to itself. Body (Corpus), the seventh spirit, encompasses the other six. It represents the "concretization" of the process through its self-expression. This concretization is the completion of the cycle, but as involving the cycle's self-awareness it includes the cycle as well. Böhme writes in Aurora, "The Seventh Spirit of God in the divine power is the corpus or body, which is generated out of the other six spirits, wherein all heavenly figures subsist, and wherein all things image and form themselves, and wherein all beauty and joy rise up."⁸⁶ For Böhme, no spirit can really be without a "body," without giving rise at some point to its own concretization. All things strive to become fully specified and concrete, including God.

Böhme refers to spirit's activity of creating a body or a determinate being for itself as Magia.⁸⁷ In Six Mystical Points, he writes that

Magic is the mother of eternity, of the being of all beings; for it creates itself, and is understood in

86. Aurora ch. 11, para. 1.

87. Six Mystical Points (Kurtze Erklärung von sechs mystischen Punkten; 1620), ch. 5, para. 5.

desire. It is in itself nothing but a will, and this will is the great mystery of all wonders and secrets, but brings itself by the imagination of the desireful hunger into being. It is the original state of Nature. Its desire makes an imagination, and imagination or figuration is only the will of desire . . . True Magic is not a being, but the desiring spirit of the being. It is a matrix without substance, but manifests itself in the substantial being . . . Magic is the greatest secrecy, for it is above Nature, and makes Nature after the form of its will. It is the mystery of the Trinity, viz. it is in desire the will striving towards the heart of God.⁸⁸

Body is also a return to the original spirit, Sour. Sour was the expression of the desire of God to contract into a hard, self-contained and self-absorbed center, without external expression. In fact, however, God as Ungrund could not achieve this desire for concretization and integrity without self-expression. Through the cycle, consummated in Body, the original will, now heavily qualified, has actually been fulfilled: God is now a concrete, self-subsistent entity, but through His othering and self-expression. As Nicolescu puts it, "The loop is thus closed: the seventh quality rejoins the first

88. Quoted in Nicolescu, 230.

The line changes into a circle: paradoxically, in the philosophy of Jakob Böhme, the Son gives birth to the Father."⁸⁹

Böhme himself employs circle metaphors to characterize his system (much as Hegel will do with his own system). Of the seven source spirits, Böhme writes at one point, "These seven generatings in all are none of them the first, the second, or the third, or last, but they are all seven, every one of them, both the first, second, third, fourth, and last. Yet I must set them down one after another, according to a creaturely way and manner, otherwise you could not understand it: For the Deity is as a wheel with seven wheels made one in another, wherein a man sees neither beginning nor end."⁹⁰ In Aurora, the number of source spirits varies. Böhme lists early on "sweet, sour, bitter, trembling, burning, rising up, stabbing, penetrating, tempering, cooling, warming, drying, and soothing."⁹¹ However, the number of spirits was pared down, even in Aurora, and in subsequent works the pattern discussed here was never consistent.

In addition to the seven source spirits, Böhme also employs a triadic theory of "principles," which serves as a kind of ur-dialectic, accounting for the dynamics of the dialectic of the seven. The first two principles are

89. Ibid., 32.

90. Aurora, ch. 23, para. 18; Sparrow, 615-616; see also ch. 13, para. 71-74.

91. Weeks, Jacob Böhme, 68.

Darkness and Light (Dunkelheit and Licht). The third principle, which Böhme usually does not name, functions to "reconcile" the first two. Böhme writes in Description of the Three Principles of God's Essence:

Now thus the eternal light, and the virtue of the light, or the heavenly paradise, moves in the eternal darkness; and the darkness cannot surround the light; for they are two different principles; and the darkness longs after the light, because the spirit beholds itself in it, and because the divine virtue is manifested in it. But although darkness has not comprehended the divine virtue and light, it still has continually with great lust lifted itself up towards it, until it has kindled the root of the fire in itself, from the beams of the light of God; and in this arose the third principle: And it has its original out of the first Principle, out of the dark matrix, by the mirroring of the virtue of God.⁹²

Darkness yearns for Light; the in-itself presupposes the for-itself. In its yearning, there is kindled within the Darkness a fire. Light is the pure principle of openness, of manifestation without any hiddenness. Fire is the actualization of the pure principle of Light in

92. Böhme, Six Mystical Points; ch. 7, para. 25.

reality. With the kindling of fire (the alchemical agent of change), a reconciliation is reached between Darkness and Light. The fire burns, but within Darkness: the self-revelation will be of an entity that maintains its integrity, its identity--and thus always an element of inwardness--in and through its manifestation; presence will carry with it a concomitant absence. Böhme writes in Mysterium Magnum, "the eternal free will has introduced itself into darkness, pain, and source; and so also through the darkness into the fire and light, even into a kingdom of joy; in order that the Nothing might be known in the Something."⁹³

The three principles describe in broad strokes the dynamic of God's self-manifestation through the seven spirits: the cycle of the seven is a cycle of concealing-revealing-determination. Deghaye calls the third principle "our universe" because it is through creation (as described in more detail in the seven spirits cycle) that God's self-revelation is determinate and possible. In some sense the three principles "produce" or perhaps "model" the dialectic of the seven source spirits.⁹⁴

93. Mysterium Magnum, Ch 26, para. 37.

94. Deghaye makes an interesting point about Böhme's description of the action of God qua Darkness: "In the Kabbalah of Isaac Luria, there is a similar phenomenon: at the origin of all worlds, the Infinite contracts itself and thus begins the true drama, in the bosom of divinity." Pierre Deghaye, La Nuisance de Dieu ou La doctrine de Jakob Böhme (Paris: Albin Michel, Collection Spiritualités Vivantes, 1985), 156.

Returning to Böhme's conception of Tone, the "epiphenomenon" or song of love through which Body is actualized and the process of self-manifestation is completed, Böhme conceives the highest form of Tone in nature to be the speech of man. It is through human speech, human thought, that God achieves his highest and most consummate self-knowledge, for we are the beings who in thought and speech can reflect upon the whole of the cycle of creation. Böhme's account of the order of creation is quite complex, and I can only indicate some of the most important points here.

In words that call to mind the Emerald Tablet, Böhme writes at one point of the unity of all things: "When I take up a stone or clod of earth and look upon it, I see that which is above and that which is below, indeed [I see] the whole world therein . . . "95 He writes in Clavis (1624): "The whole visible world is a joyful spermatic [eitel spermatischen] active ground; each essence longs for the other, the above for the below and the below for the above, since they are separated from one another, and in such hunger they embrace one another in the desire . . . "96 Böhme describes the "world's existence" as "Nothing else than coagulated smoke from the eternal aether, which thus has a fulfillment like the eternal."97

95. Mysterium Magnum, ch. 2, para. 6.

96. Quoted in Walsh, Böhme and Hegel, 241.

97. Six Theosophical Points (Von sechs theosophischen Puncten; 1620), ch. 2, para. 19.

Before men, God created angels. The angels aid God in the formation of all things according to the seven spirits, for, as Böhme writes in Aurora, "All the creatures are made and descended from these qualities."⁹⁸ They also praise God, providing Him with some degree of "reflection into Himself" (to paraphrase a Hegelian locution). Among the angels, Lucifer was the most magnificent. However, Lucifer, representing the "Sour" quality of in-drawing, broke away from God, thinking himself able to create through the ember of divine fire within him. Lucifer represents the will to isolation, cutting-off, a selfishness that all things exhibit. As Walsh puts it, Lucifer "can 'imagine' his angry fire into all things and by hardening their wills can extinguish the divine light within them."⁹⁹

Man is created as a kind of replacement for Lucifer and the "fallen angels" who joined him. Man, for Böhme, is a microcosm containing all the seven spirits within himself. Böhme speaks of man receiving God's Wisdom (Sophia, again, conceived as female) as wife. In man's soul there "hovers the revelation of the divine holiness, as the living outflowing Word of God with the eternally known Idea, which was known in divine Wisdom from eternity as a Subjectum or form of the divine imagination."¹⁰⁰ The

98. Aurora, ch. 2, para. 1, Sparrow, 50.

99. Walsh, Böhme and Hegel, 227.

100. Quoted in Ibid., 237-238.

first man was androgynous and possessed supernatural powers. He/She could procreate at will by the power of imagination, could exist without eating or sleeping, and could alter the essences of objects through magic words (a power which suggests alchemical transmutation).¹⁰¹ In naming the animals, Adam drew on the essence of each, for in the Natursprache (nature language) of Adam, the being of a thing is captured in its name.¹⁰² In Böhme's telling of the myth of the Garden of Eden, man must fall because the unity man enjoys with God in paradise is an unthinking, unreflective, and thus inferior unity. Man must become alienated from God and return to a higher state of unity, in full consciousness of his nature and the nature of God.

How did the fall come about? Adam wanted knowledge of each of the spirits of nature. In the garden, the Tree of Good and Evil represents disharmony, a separation of the spirits of nature into units under the sway of the "Eternal No," withdrawn into themselves, spurning unity. Thinking that it would provide him with the wisdom he sought, Adam naively ate of this tree (or, in Böhme's telling, he intuited it with his imagination).¹⁰³ Adam's action constituted a turning away from divine unity. Immediately, Adam's nature was radically altered and he desperately sought reunification with the divine. This desire

101. Mysterium Magnum, ch. 17, para. 43.

102. Ibid., ch. 35, para. 56.

103. Ibid., ch. 18, para. 33

manifested itself first in shame, in awareness of the exposure of his bodily imperfection. The revulsion that Adam and all human beings feel about their condition of lack, degradation, and frailty just is the urge to reunite with God.

Wisdom was revealed yet again to men, however, through a man, Jesus Christ, who was perfectly married to Sophia. Christ is the second Adam. Through Christ's passion, death and resurrection (which Böhme makes equivalent to the work of alchemical transmutation¹⁰⁴) a secret teaching has been revealed to man which can show him the way to at-one-ment with the divine. The interpretation of the Scriptures opens up the possibility of man the microcosm's self-knowledge--what Böhme has striven to accomplish in his work. Böhme writes in Aurora, "you need not ask, Where is God? Harken, you blind man; you live in God, and God is in you; and if you live holily, then therein you yourself are God."¹⁰⁵ Through our self-reflection nature reaches a kind of closure: its pure, eternal forms are identified for what they are. Given that we are natural beings, our contemplation of the forms of nature amounts to nature's holding up a mirror to itself, and given that the nature of nature is the thought of God, it is a mirror held up to God. Thus, through our human understanding, God is fully actualized: He achieves self-awareness and closure. Böhme

104. De Signatura Rerum (1622), ch. 11 para. 6.

105. Aurora, ch. 22, para. 46; Sparrow, 594.

dispenses, however, with the conception of a "divine plan" in nature: for him, the whole is simply the necessary working out of the opposition of the two wills of self-centredness and self-giving or manifestation. This, of course, means that Böhme holds the problematic view that God is ruled by necessity.

Böhme does not present philosophical arguments. How then does he explain his access to this wisdom? He holds the view that before his fall, Adam was privy to the Wisdom of God, "But yet when he fell, and was set into the outward birth or geniture, he knew it no more, but kept it in remembrance only as a dark and veiled story [sondern als eine dunkele und verdeckte Geschichte im Gedächtnis behalten]; and this he left to his posterity."

I interpret this to be a theory of something like the Jungian collective unconscious: buried in our subconscious (a word which, of course, Böhme did not know) are significant images--"dark and veiled stories"--which are keys to the meaning of the cosmos, and these images are common to all men--to Adam's "posterity." Böhme claims, as Walsh puts it, "that it should not be considered impossible for someone to talk about the creation of the world as if he were there, because the Spirit which is in us is the same which breathed into Adam form eternal and which sees

it all in the light of God."¹⁰⁶ Using a kind of "active imagination" to recollect these latent symbols, Böhme worked out his theosophy.

In his Access to Western Esotericism, Antoine Faivre ranks "imagination" as "the essential component of esotericism."¹⁰⁷ The idea of occult correspondences which figures so largely in Hermeticism depends upon "a form of imagination inclined to reveal and use mediations of all kinds, such as rituals, symbolic images, mandalas, intermediary spirits."¹⁰⁸ But this imagination does not create from nothing, rather it "recalls" images and associations from the collective unconscious of the race. Imagination depends upon memory. Faivre writes that "it is especially under the inspiration of the Corpus Hermeticum rediscovered in the fifteenth century that memory and imagination are associated to the extent of blending together. After all, a part of the teaching of Hermes Trismegistus consisted of 'interiorizing' the world in our mens, from whence the 'arts of memory' cultivated in the light of magic, during and after the Renaissance."¹⁰⁹ As we have seen, the occult philosophy of Bruno depended upon the relationship of imagination to memory. Böhme continues this tradition by developing his theosophy

106. Walsh, Böhme and Hegel, 139; cf. Description of the Three Principles of God's Being (Beschreibung der drey Principien Göttliches Wesens; 1619), ch. 7, para. 7.

107. Faivre, Access to Western Esotericism, 21.

108. Ibid., 12.

109. Ibid., 13.

entirely in terms of images which carry both a literal (often alchemical) and figurative sense.

News of Böhme's revelations reached Georg Richter, the leading Lutheran pastor of Görlitz, after copies of Aurora began circulating in Görlitz and outlying areas. Richter immediately denounced Böhme to the authorities as a heretic, and even attacked him from the pulpit. As a result, Böhme was forbidden to write further. He obeyed this edict for seven years, but then in 1619 Böhme took up his pen yet again and there followed a stream of publications leading up to the year of his death in 1624. Richter continued to persecute him, and he was even imprisoned, but only for a short time. After Böhme's death, a group of his detractors in Görlitz vandalized the cross which stood at his grave.

Böhme had a great influence over a small group of friends, mainly the nobility, who copied and distributed his manuscripts and acted to protect him as much as they could. In his Kabbalah, Gershom Scholem writes that "In certain circles, particularly in Germany, Holland, and England, Christian Kabbalah henceforward assumed a Böhmanian guise. In 1673 a large chart was erected in a Protestant church in Teinach (Southern Germany), which had as its purpose the presentation of a kind of visual summary of

this school of Christian Kabbalah. Several different interpretations were given to it."¹¹⁰

At first, Böhme's theosophy had little following in Germany, but became quite popular in England. It was through French Hermeticists such as Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743-1803), who translated Böhme into French, that Böhme eventually came to make an impact on German thought, but, as Heinrich Schneider notes, "in the German secret societies [Böhme's ideas] had never been forgotten."¹¹¹ I will have more to say about these societies in the following chapter.

Böhme's first German follower of note was Johann Georg Gichtel (1638-1710). Gichtel published an edition of Böhme's works in 1682, as well as works of his own in which he developed Böhme's theosophy. Quirinus Kuhlmann (1651-1689), a chiliast with messianic aspirations, was introduced to Böhme by Friedrich Breckling (1629-1710), the same man who had taught Gichtel. Kuhlmann eventually turned up in Moscow to preach his evangel, and was promptly burned at the stake. Böhme also influenced Pierre Poiret (1646-1719), who, though a French Protestant, was a pastor in Germany. Poiret edited the writings of Antoinette Bourignon (1616-1680), a mystic who announced herself as

110. I will have more to say about this painting in the following chapter. Gershom Scholem, Kabbalah (New York: New American Library, 1974), 200. I will return to the topic of this "chart" in the following chapter.

111. Heinrich Schneider, 81

"the Virgin" Böhme had prophesied as appearing at the end of time. Gottfried Arnold (1666-1714) published his landmark work Impartial History of Churches and Heretics in 1699. Arnold shocked many by arguing that it was the heretics--among whom he gave prominent place to Böhme--who represented the true religion. Böhme's theosophy became quite influential in pietist circles, until by the end of the seventeenth century Böhmeanism, as F. Ernest Stoeffler states, "constituted a considerable challenge to established Lutheranism."¹¹²

Ernst Benz has written that "In a certain sense one can refer to the philosophy of German Idealism as a Böhme-Renaissance, when Böhme was discovered at the same time by Schelling, Hegel, Franz von Baader, Tieck, Novalis and many others."¹¹³ Indeed, Baader (1765-1841), called "Böhmius redivivus," is often still regarded as Böhme's principle interpreter. He would become perhaps the most significant and influential Hermeticist of the nineteenth century. Hegel was an avid reader of Baader.¹¹⁴ Clark Butler refers to "Hegel's abortive courtship of von Baader," and writes that "despite apparent differences, Hegel sought to

112. Stoeffler, 168.

113. Ernst Benz, Adam der Mythos vom Urmenschen (Munich: Barth, 1955), 23.

114. See Hegel: The Letters, trans. Clark Butler and Christianne Seiler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 572; or see Johannes Hoffmeister, Briefe von und an Hegel, 4 vols. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1952-81). Hoffmeister numbers the letters. This is number 699. Henceforth, references to Hegel's letters will be written as follows: "Butler, 572; Hoffmeister #699."

persuade both the public and von Baader himself that their positions were reconcilable. . . . Von Baader responded negatively to such overtures, though he respected Hegel as a critic of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling."¹¹⁵ Hegel even stated in print that he and Baader shared the goal of translating Böhme's eccentric, sensualistic theosophy into "scientific" terms (see Chapter Five). Baader did not share this view, but he did do Hegel the honor of announcing his intention to dedicate a new edition of Böhme's Mysterium Magnum to him. Baader discovered Böhme in 1787 and made it his project not only to take up and refashion Böhmeanism for the new age, but to synthesize Böhme and Eckhart.

It is Baader who should receive most of the credit for the awakening of interest in mysticism in the nineteenth century. He was not, however, as faithful a disciple of Böhme as was, for instance, F.C. Oetinger (1702-1782). Baader was also strongly influenced by Tauler, Eckhart, and Paracelsus. It was Baader's belief that the entire world, including man, is fallen and depraved. Edward Allen Beach refers to this belief as Baader's "idée fixe."¹¹⁶ Baader rejected any attempt to "immanentize" God, any attempt to identify the infinite with the finite. Although the Divine One transcends the the world of multiplicity, the world is

115. Butler, Hegel: The Letters, editorial comment, 570.

116. Edward Allen Beach, The Potencies of Gods: Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 79.

utterly dependent upon it. In this sense, Baader is a more conventional theologian than Böhme and his other heirs. Like Oetinger and the idealists, however, he opposed rationalism and mechanism, and advocated an organic model of reality. I will deal with eighteenth century followers of Böhme in the next chapter, along with Böhme's influence on German romanticism and idealism.

In Hegel's Development, H.S. Harris writes that "I am inclined to believe in Böhme's influence upon Hegel from 1801 onwards."¹¹⁷ It is possible, however, that Hegel could have encountered Böhme's work as early as the mid to late 1790's, in the midst of what Rosenkranz has termed his "theosophical phase" (see Chapter Three). David Walsh has argued that Hegel's use in the Phenomenology of Spirit of such terms as "element," "aether," "expansion," and "contraction" has its roots in his acquaintance with Böhme and Paracelsian alchemy.¹¹⁸ I will deal with the Phenomenology's further debts to Böhme in Chapter Four. Hegel refers to Böhme explicitly in his Science of Logic (1832 edition), Philosophy of Nature, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, and elsewhere.

117. H.S. Harris, Hegel's Development, Vol. II: Night Thoughts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 85.

118. David Walsh, "The Historical Dialectic of Spirit: Jacob Böhme's Influence on Hegel," in History and System: Hegel's Philosophy of History, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 28. Walsh believes that only the influence of Böhme can explain why Hegel believes that history has a structure, and that it is to be understood in terms of the development of Spirit.

Hegel's most famous treatment of Böhme is in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy of 1805. There, Hegel couples Böhme with Francis Bacon as the twin representatives of "Modern Philosophy in its First Statement." He makes the transition from Bacon to Böhme by remarking "We now pass on from this English Lord Chancellor, the leader of the external, sensuous method in Philosophy, to the philosophicus teutonicus, as he is called--to the German cobbler of Lusatia, of whom we have no reason to be ashamed. It was, in fact, through him that Philosophy first appeared in Germany with a character peculiar to itself: Böhme stands in exact antithesis to Bacon" (LHP III, 188; Werke 20, 91).¹¹⁹

Hegel's discussion of Böhme in the Lectures occupies twenty-eight full pages in the Suhrkamp edition of his works--significantly more space than he devotes to important "mainstream" figures like Locke, Hobbes, Hume, Rousseau and Jacobi. Hegel's account of Böhme's theosophy is quite faithful and positive, and shows that Hegel was familiar with several of Böhme's works. Hegel draws comparisons between Böhme and Proclus, Bruno, and Paracelsus. It is clear that he sees much of his own thought in Böhme's peculiar, imagistic theosophy. Hegel writes that although it "appears strange to read of the bitterness of God, of the flash, and of lightning," once we

119. Hegel mentions in the same passage that philosophia teutonica was once used as a term for mysticism.

have "the Idea" in hand "then we certainly discern its presence here" (LHP III, 193; Werke 20, 95).¹²⁰ Hegel writes, further, that "Böhme's chief, and one may even say, his only thought--the thought that permeates all his works--is that of perceiving the Holy Trinity in everything, and recognizing everything as its revelation and manifestation . . . in such a way, moreover, that all things have this divine Trinity in themselves, not as a Trinity pertaining to the ordinary conception, but as the real Trinity of the Absolute Idea" (LHP III, 196; Werke 20, 98).¹²¹ Hegel notes that Böhme regards the Trinity as "the absolute Substance" (die absolute Substanz) (LHP III, 212; Werke 20, 115).

Hegel's major objection to Böhme is well known: "Böhme's great mind is confined in the hard knotty oak of the senses--in the gnarled concretion of ordinary conception--and is not able to arrive at a free presentation of the Idea" (LHP III, 195; Werke 20, 98). Apparently, Hegel is objecting to passages such as the following, which are typical of Böhme's style: "The whole

120. Later, Hegel writes that "the principle of the Concept [Begriff] is living within him, only he cannot express it in the form of thought" (LHP III, 197; Werke 20, 100).

121. Compare this comment to J.N. Findlay's observation about Hegel's system, quoted in the Introduction: "[Hegel's] whole system may in fact be regarded as an attempt to see the Christian mysteries in everything whatever, every natural process, every form of human activity, and every logical transition." See Findlay, Hegel: A Re-Examination (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 131.

Deity has in its innermost or beginning birth, in the pith or kernel, a very tart, terrible sharpness, in which the sour quality is a very horrible, tart, hard, dark and cold attraction or drawing together, like winter, when there is a fierce, bitter, cold frost, when water is frozen into ice, and besides it is very intolerable."¹²²

Some commentators have taken this as justifying the claim that Hegel decisively rejects Böhme's theosophy. However, H.S. Harris finds that Hegel's criticism is "quite consistent with his evident desire [discussed earlier in section two above] to show that the older alchemical tradition of Paracelsus (and probably Böhme himself) contained symbolic expressions of important speculative truths."¹²³ In other words, Hegel rejects the "sensuous" manner in which Böhme's theosophy is presented, but accepts much of the inner core of its teaching. As Walsh puts it, "such qualifications aside, when Hegel comes to the content of Böhme's speculation he is clearly a believer."¹²⁴

I will have something to say about Hegel's relation to Böhme in every chapter which follows; so deep is Hegel's debt to him.¹²⁵

122. Aurora, ch. 13, para 55, Sparrow 324.

123. Harris, Night Thoughts, 399.

124. Walsh, "Historical Dialectic," 18.

125. I concur with Cyril O'Regan when he suggests "massive structural correspondences" between Hegel and Böhme. See Cyril O'Regan, The Heterodox Hegel, 18-19.

4. Spinoza and Leibniz

Turning to "mainstream philosophy" in recent years the influence of Hermeticism on Spinoza in Holland (1632-1677) and Leibniz in Germany (1646-1716) has been acknowledged by a number of scholars.¹²⁶ The most difficult case is that of "Spinoza's Kabbalism." Spinoza uses no Kabbalistic terminology, nor does he ever cite a Kabbalistic text. The evidence of his "Kabbalism" is therefore doctrinal (is his philosophy similar to Kabbalah in important respects?) and biographical (did he study the Kabbalah or make the acquaintance of Kabbalists?). Interestingly, some of the first works to deal with Spinoza rather matter-of-factly take him to be a Kabbalist. Jacques Basnage in his History of the Jews from Jesus Christ to the Present Time (1708), says of Spinoza "He has never cited the Cabalists as his vouchers, because that man was so extremely jealous of the immortality of his name, that he designed to pass for an original, and an inventor of his opinions."¹²⁷ As to the facts surrounding Spinoza's excommunication (which have remained unclear up to the present), Basnage conjectures

126. I include Spinoza here simply because he lived his entire life in Holland, and the Dutch are a "Germanic" people.

127. Jacques Basnage, The History of the Jews from Jesus Christ to the Present Time: Containing their Antiquities, their Religion, their Rites, the Dispersion of the Ten Tribes in the East, and the Persecutions this Nation has suffered in the West. Being a Supplement and Continuation of the History of Josephus (London: T. Bever and B. Lintot, 1708; Original French edition: 1707), Book IV, ch. vii, 294.

that "the Jews rose up against him," apparently because of his "borrowings" from Kabbalah. I want to suggest, however, that a slightly different explanation is possible.

Richard Popkin and Henry Walter Brann have made strong cases recently, in two articles, for Spinoza's Kabbalism.¹²⁸ If the case can be made that Spinoza's philosophy of God as Nature is "Kabbalistic," it is actually a heterodox form of Kabbalism. (In his correspondence, Leibniz criticizes Spinoza for distorting the Kabbalah.¹²⁹) According to the "traditional" or "orthodox" teaching of Kabbalah, God is beyond all names and all predicates; God utterly transcends our knowledge, and the created world as a whole. God is beyond even the Ayin ("nothing") or Ayin Sof ("absolute all"). Thus, the ten Sephiroth of the Kabbalistic "Tree of Life" (which I will deal with in Chapter Five) are not to be understood as names of God or aspects of God, but as aspects of God's creation. There is another Kabbalistic teaching, however, which has been claimed by some authors as part of the "oral tradition of the Kabbalah."¹³⁰ According to this teaching, God does not transcend creation, but rather--as in the teaching of the Hermetica--requires creation, and

128. Richard Popkin, Henry Walter Brann, "Spinoza and the Kabbalah," in Siegfried Hessing, ed. Speculum Spinozanum 1677-1977 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), 108-18.

129. Allison Coudert, Leibniz and the Kabbalah (Boston: Kluwer, 1995), 77.

130. See Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, Kabbalah: Tradition of Hidden Knowledge (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 5.

specifically man's knowledge of him, to be complete. On this account the Kabbalistic Sephiroth become the aspects, or, to borrow the Spinozistic term, the "modes" of God--precisely the sort of approach to knowledge of God taken by Spinoza's Ethics. Now, if Spinoza professed such a heretical form of Kabbalism, it would do much to explain his excommunication. As should be obvious, the "Christian Kabbalah" takes the "heterodox" route of conceiving God as knowable through his "modes" (Sephiroth)--a natural amplification of the doctrine of the Trinity--and as immanent in the world. It is possible that Spinoza could have been influenced--directly or indirectly--by Jakob Böhme and his "heresy." Richard Popkin has written that Spinoza "was connected with many mystical non-denominational Christians, followers of the pantheism of Jakob Böhme." Also, according to Popkin, Spinoza's publisher brought out the works of Böhme and many of his followers.¹³¹ In any case, Spinoza was co-opted by the Hermeticists of Hegel's time, such as Goethe.

The case for the influence of Hermeticism on Leibniz is thankfully somewhat less speculative. Andrew Weeks writes of Leibniz that, "At times, it appears almost as if Leibniz had understood his philosophical and mathematical

131. Richard Popkin, "Spinoza, Neoplatonic Kabbalist?" in Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought, ed. Lenn E. Goodman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 391; 402. Popkin is, of course, speaking loosely when he refers to Böhme's thought as "pantheism."

thinking as a luminary's search for concealed patterns. It is as if his objective in logic had been a better Lullian art of combination; his goal in mathematics an improved numerology; as if his task in the philosophy of his Theodicy and Monadology had been a better theosophic-pansophic speculation."¹³² As I will discuss in the following chapter, there is reason to believe that Leibniz was involved in Rosicrucian circles. His interests were certainly very much like those of the Rosicrucians. In his "Introduction to a Secret Science" (Introductio ad Encyclopaediam arcanum; ca. 1679), Leibniz's description of "General Science" is strikingly pansophic:

[The General Science] includes not only what has hitherto been regarded as logic, but also the art of discovery, together with method or the means of arrangement, synthesis and analysis, didactics, or the science of teaching, Gnostologia (the so-called Noologia), the art of memory or mnemonics, the Art of Combination, the Art of Subtlety, and philosophical grammar; the Art of Lull, the Cabala of the wise, and

132. Weeks, German Mysticism, 203. Other authors who have made similar claims include Allison Coudert, "Some Theories of a natural Language from the Renaissance to the Seventeenth Century" Studia Leibnitiana, Sonderheft (1978), 56-114 and also see below; Friedrich Heer, "Einführung," Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, ed. and selected by Friedrich Heer (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1958). George Macdonald Ross, "Leibniz and Alchemy," in Studia Leibnitiana, Sonderheft 7, 166-77.

natural magic. Perhaps it also includes Ontology, or the science of something and nothing, being and not being, the thing and its mode, and substance and accident. It does not make much difference how you divide the sciences, for they are one continuous body, like the ocean.¹³³

Allison Coudert's recent Leibniz and the Kabbalah has made a strong case for the influence of the Kabbalistic teachings of Issac Luria on Leibniz.¹³⁴ She discusses in detail Leibniz's relationship to Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614-1698), and Knorr von Rosenroth (1636-1689), two leading Kabbalist-Alchemist-Hermeticists of the time. Helmont was the son of John Baptist van Helmont, a renowned alchemist who claimed to have seen and touched the philosopher's stone. (Hegel praises Helmont in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy as having "many profound thoughts," but gets his dates wrong; LHP III, 113; Werke 20, 15.) Gershom Scholem writes that "In the seventeenth century Christian Kabbalah received two great impetuses, one being the theosophical writings of Jakob Böhme, and the other Knorr von Rosenroth's vast Kabbalistic compendium Kabbalah Denudata (1677-84), which for the first

133. G.W. Leibniz, "Introduction to a Secret Science" in Philosophical Writings, ed. G.H.R. Parkinson, trans. Marry Morris and G.H.R. Parkinson (London: Everyman, 1973), 5-6.

134. See above for citation. I will discuss Luria's Kabbalah in Chapter Seven.

time made available to interested Christian readers--most of whom were undoubtedly mystically inclined themselves--not only important sections of the Zohar but sizeable excerpts from Lurianic Kabbalah as well."¹³⁵

Giordano Bruno is frequently cited as the source of Leibniz's monadology, but Coudert argues instead for the influence of von Rosenroth and van Helmont. Van Helmont's contribution to the Kabbala Denudata was a dialogue in which he discussed a new concept of matter and spoke of "monads." Indeed, it appears that Leibniz's relationship with van Helmont was particularly close. Leibniz kept a detailed record of his conversations with van Helmont, including their discussions of Kabbalah. Leibniz first met him in Mainz in 1671, where they discussed alchemy at length. Leibniz's interest in alchemy was no secret: some years after his meeting with van Helmont he was elected secretary of an alchemical society in Nuremburg, a fact to which Hegel himself alludes (LHP III, 326; Werke 20, 234). According to Coudert, Leibniz had the reputation of "an adept with deep theoretical knowledge."¹³⁶ Leibniz's final words on his death bed are reported to have concerned the transmutation of iron nails into gold "through the action of a certain spring."¹³⁷

135. Scholem, Kabbalah, 200.

136. Coudert, Leibniz and the Kabbalah, 7.

137. Ibid., 7.

Coudert, drawing on the work of Anne Becco, argues that Leibniz actually wrote van Helmont's last book, a Christian Kabbalist work entitled Some Premeditate and Considerate Thoughts upon the Four First Chapters of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis (published 1697). In this work, van Helmont/Leibniz describes creation as the articulation of divine thought. Beresith, the first word of Genesis is interpreted as meaning not "in the beginning" but "in the head" (a reading still supported by some scholars). This would make the first sentence of Genesis, "In the head, God [Elohim] created the heavens and the earth"--calling to mind the Egyptian Memphite theology discussed in the Introduction, as well as gnostic Hermeticism and, of course, modern idealism.

Van Helmont had claimed in earlier works that Hebrew was the "Adamic" language--the language in which the prisca theologia was first communicated. Leibniz, however, claimed that German was closest to the primordial language of man! This is perhaps a fitting way to end this chapter, which began with Kriegsmann's claim that the Germans are descended from Thoth. Although the seventeenth century must probably take the honor of being Germany's "most Hermetic," it would be in the following century that these currents of thought would capture the minds of the greatest poets and philosophers Germany has produced. The century began auspiciously when, in 1706, the first complete German

translation of the Ficino's Hermetic collection Pimander
was published in Hamburg.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE HERMETIC MILIEU OF HEGEL'S EARLY YEARS

"One has only to say the words "College of Tübingen"
to grasp what German philosophy is at bottom--a
cunning theology. . . .

The Swabians are the best liars in Germany, they lie
innocently. . . . "

--Friedrich Nietzsche,
The Anti-Christ¹

Hegel is a Swabian and shocking people is his passion,
as it is the passion of all Swabians.

--Hans-Georg Gadamer,
"Die Verkehrte Welt"²

1. Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry

In the Introduction and Chapter One, I have dealt with
the fundamental concepts of Hermeticism, as well as roughly
the first 1,600 years of the Hermetic tradition. In this
chapter I shall deal in part with events in the seventeenth
century, but in the main with the late eighteenth, the so-

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols/ The Anti-Christ, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1968), 133.

2. Gadamer, "Die Verkehrte Welt," Hegel-Studien, Beiheft 3 (1966): 135-54; 137. Quoted in Donald Phillip Verene, Hegel's Recollection (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 54.

called Goethezeit, the period of Hegel's youth. Histories of modern thought often portray Hermeticism as on the decline in this period. This is far from true. If anything, the eighteenth century was a renaissance of Hermeticism.

By far the most important event in the history of seventeenth-century Hermeticism was the appearance of the Rosicrucian manifestoes. It was in the town of Kassel in Brunswick in 1614 that the first of the mysterious alchemical-Kabbalistic manifestoes appeared. Titled Fama Fraternitatis and totaling only 38 pages, the work was addressed to "all the learned in Europe," and named as its source "the praiseworthy order of the Rose Cross." The Fama Fraternitatis had been circulating in manuscript throughout Europe since at least 1610,³ and some of the Rosicrucian texts were being circulated in manuscript form among like-minded individuals in Tübingen as early as the 1590's.⁴ The Fama was later republished with two other works--Reform of the Universe, and Short Reply to the Esteemed Fraternity of the Rose-Cross--in a volume totaling 147 pages, signed by one "Adam Haselmayer."

3. Roland Edighoffer, "Rosicrucianism: From the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century," in Modern Esoteric Spirituality, ed. Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 186.

4. See J. Montgomery, The Cross and the Crucible, 2 vols. (The Hague, 1973), 204ff; also Will-Erich Peuckert, Die Rosenkreutzer: Zur Geschichte einer Reformation (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1928), 96-99.

The second Rosicrucian manifesto, Confessio Fraternitatis, appeared in 1615. The third and most famous Rosicrucian work, The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz, an allegorical prose poem laden with alchemical imagery, appeared in 1616. In The Chemical Wedding, Rosenkreuz is portrayed wearing a white tunic with a red cross, which was also the insignia of the Knights Templar. The Knights Templar were a mystical crusader order who cultivated contacts with Jewish and Islamic esotericists. Julius Evola observes that, "Historically speaking, Rosicrucianism should be regarded as one of the secret currents that emerged following the destruction of the Templar Order . . . " ⁵ (I will shortly discuss the connection between the Templars and Freemasonry.) Two images are associated with Rosicrucianism, owing to the ambiguity of the German Rosenkreuz: a red cross, and a cross with roses, usually blooming from the center. The meaning of these images has provoked much speculation. Roland Edighoffer ventures that "the rose is a symbol of the anima drawn from prime matter and conferring new life on the body, and the cross is the symbol of totality." ⁶

The three works modestly proposed the "General Reformation of the Entire World." The Rosicrucian manifestoes centered around the legendary figure of

5. Julius Evola, The Hermetic Tradition, trans. E.E. Rehmus (Rochester VT: Inner Traditions, 1995), 158.

6. Edighoffer, 200.

Christian Rosenkreuz, who was supposed to have been born in 1378, taught the Hermetic art by Arabs, and died in 1484. These writings contained, in the words of Antoine Faivre "traces of the Christian Kabbalah, Pythagoreanism, and a strong dose of Paracelsism."⁷ Frances Yates has argued that a section of one of the manifestoes is based on John Dee's Monas hieroglyphica (1564).⁸ According to Yates, during his stay in Bohemia (1589) Dee launched an alchemical movement advocating religious reform.⁹

Heinrich Schneider notes that the Rosicrucians "declared that the unification with God was demonstrable and possible already on earth. For that demonstration they were leaning upon a modification of enlightened natural philosophy which upheld that nature in its teleological structure was a gradual revelation of God."¹⁰ Given that Böhme's first work was not even written until 1612, it does not seem plausible to suppose that he influenced the Rosicrucians. Rather, it is more likely to suppose that the Rosicrucian movement influenced Böhme.¹¹ Heinrich Schneider has suggested that "Böhme took up the Rosicrucian pansophy and the reformatory plans connected with it . . .

7. Antoine Faivre, Access to Western Esotericism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 64.

8. Frances Yates, The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 170.

9. Frances Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment (London: Routledge and Kegan-Paul, 1972), xiii.

10. Heinrich Schneider, Quest for Mysteries: The Masonic Background for Literature in Eighteenth-Century Germany (Ithaca: Cornell, 1947), 45.

11. Interestingly, the word "Aurora" occurs in the Fama.

"12. W.E. Peuckert has argued the reverse: that Rosicrucian pansophy is basically identical to Böhme's theosophy.¹³ It is known that some of these writings circulated in Böhme's region, which, as I have discussed, was given to occultism.¹⁴ Andrew Weeks notes that Böhme incorporated two Rosicrucian slogans into his writings: the "age of the rose" and the "new reformation."¹⁵

The Rosicrucian movement is alleged to have involved members of many different religious denominations.¹⁶ The Rosicrucians held a doctrine of prisca theologia, the position that there is one true, trans-denominational, trans-cultural theology, an account of divine being revealed by God to man in the remote past. They believed that if this ancient wisdom could be recovered it would unify the world's religions.¹⁷ The Rosicrucians were supposed to adopt the dress and manners of the different lands into which they travelled, a fact which Julius Evola takes as symbolic of the belief in prisca theologia or philosophia perennis.¹⁸ Antoine Faivre offers the

12. Heinrich Schneider, 43.

13. See Peuckert, Rosenkreutzer.

14. Andrew Weeks, Boehme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 95.

15. Ibid., 95.

16. Yates, Rosicrucian Enlightenment, 98.

17. Allison Coudert, Leibniz and the Kabbalah (Boston: Kluwer, 1995), 8.

18. Evola, Hermetic Tradition, 161. One is also reminded of part three of Descartes's Discourse on Method, in which he recommends, as a matter of prudence, obedience to the laws and customs of the country in which one finds oneself. See below for Descartes's relation to Rosicrucianism.

following list of important authors who helped disseminate Rosicrucian ideas: Robert Fludd (1574-1637), Julius Sperber (?-1619), Elias Ashmole (1617-1692), Michael Maier (ca. 1566-1622), Samuel Hartlib (1595-1662), Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670), John Heydon (The Holy Guide, 1662), and Theophilus Schweighardt (Speculum sophericum-Rhodo-Stauricum, 1618).¹⁹

The manifestoes may not have been the product of an actual, organized "Rosicrucian movement." Instead, they may simply have been the product of a handful of authors hoping to found an actual movement. The principal author and perhaps the "inventor" of Rosicrucianism seems to have been Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), a native of Württemberg. Andreae's father was a distinguished theologian known as the "Luther of Württemberg." His grandfather, Jakob Andreae, had a hand in drafting the Formula of Concord of 1580, which aimed at unifying Lutherans and Calvinists. Johann Valentin Andreae was trained as a pastor at the Tübingen Stift, but was forced to interrupt his studies as a result of his involvement in a political scandal.

The Rosicrucian manifestoes captured the imagination of scores of intellectuals throughout Europe, many of whom desperately tried to make contact with the "order" and to join its ranks. Francis Yates has argued that Descartes

19. Faivre, Access to Western Esotericism, 65.

was one of these seekers.²⁰ She has also argued for the influence of Rosicrucianism on Bacon.²¹ Some even wrote their own "Rosicrucian" works in hopes of earning the favor of the order. Eventually, however, when the Rosicrucians failed to appear, interest began to wane.

In 1619, Andreae tried again to stir interest with his Republicae Christianapolitane descriptio (or Christianapolis), which called for a "new reformation." There was no longer any talk of Rosicrucians, but as Frances Yates puts it "A rose by any other name . . ." ²² Christianapolis preached a mysterious doctrine of "theosophy" which involved a theory of mystical architecture. Just as he had done in the Rosicrucian writings, in Christianapolis Andreae places a strong emphasis on medicine and healing the sick (this reflects, perhaps, an influence of Paracelsism). Andreae was now issuing the call for the formation of "Christian Societies" or "Christian Unions." Such groups, which were strongly similar to Swabian pietist societies, were actually formed, but the "Societas Christiana" came to an end with the outbreak of the Thirty Year's War. In 1628 Andreae attempted to restart the organization in Nuremberg. Frances Yates writes that "It may have been through the continuous life of this branch that, in later years,

20. Weeks, Boehme, 95.

21. See Yates, Rosicrucian Enlightenment, 118-129

22. Yates Rosicrucian Enlightenment, 147.

Leibniz came into contact with Rosicrucian ideas. There is a persistent rumour that Leibniz joined a Rosicrucian society at Nuremberg in 1666."²³ The precepts of Leibniz's proposed "Order of Charity" are, according to Yates, "practically a quotation from the Fama."²⁴ I shall discuss a later incarnation of the Rosicrucian movement, and Hegel's possible connections to it, in Chapter Seven.

It is uncertain when Freemasonry was founded, or what its original purpose was. It nevertheless became a repository for Hermetic philosophy, even employing the symbolic figure of Hermes Trismegistus in some of its rituals.²⁵ The Freemasons numbered among their members some of the most prominent minds in Europe, and flourished in Germany. Masonic historians distinguish between "Speculative" Masonry and "Operative Masonry," which is literal stonemasonry, and points to the probable origins of the society among actual stone masons. With the inception of "speculative Masonry" the society was no longer one of actual masons (alone), and the literal masonic rites and trappings of the order take on a symbolic, and metaphysical significance. The Rosicrucians came to exercise an influence over Freemasonry, helping to make it even more mystical.

23. Ibid., 154.

24. Ibid., 154

25. Antoine Faivre, The Eternal Hermes: From Greek God to Alchemical Magus (Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press, 1995), 177.

The first lodges in Germany were established in the 1730's, and were of the Franco-Scottish "speculative" variety. The Stuarts, while in France, are supposed to have been intimately involved in the spread of Masonry throughout Europe. It is from them that the "Scottish Rite" form of Masonry is thought to originate. The Scottish Rite involved further, higher degrees--"preserved and handed down in Scotland"²⁶--over and above those offered by other lodges. Scottish Rite Masonry is supposed to have exhibited connections with such aspects of Hermetic thought as alchemy and Kabbalism. An offshoot of the Scottish Rite, the so-called "Strict Observance" Masonry, maintained that Masonry originated in Scotland as a survival of the Knights Templar. It is claimed that before his execution the last Grand Master of the Templars, Jacques de Molay, assigned Hugo von Salm, a Canon of Mainz, the mission of smuggling important Templar documents into Scotland. De Molay's hope was that the Templars could be reactivated there under another name. That name, according to the tradition, is Freemasonry.²⁷ Strict Observance Masonry incorporated references to the Templars into its rites and degrees.

26. Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln, Holy Blood, Holy Grail (New York: Dell Publishing, 1983), 145.

27. Some scholars have argued that this story, long dismissed as mere legend, may be fact. See Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, The Temple and the Lodge (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1989).

Like the Rosicrucians, the Masons believed in the fundamental identity of all religions. Beneath the superficial differences of religions was supposed to lie a prisca theologia. According to Schneider, "The aim of the lodges was the creation of a new man through membership in a communion mirroring a rational universe of freedom and love, just as primitive Christianity had once sought to call into being children of God for the Kingdom of God."²⁸ Indeed, as we have seen, Sebastian Franck's "Invisible Church" was one of the precepts of Masonry.²⁹ Edmond Mazet writes that Masonry would lead its members, "each through proper understanding of his own faith, to this transcendental truth."³⁰ Indeed, Masonry would come to "incorporate" Rosicrucianism, investing its higher degrees with Rosicrucian imagery. (Francis Yates has written of the connections between European Freemasonry and the Rosicrucian movement in her The Rosicrucian Enlightenment.³¹) In 1738 Pope Clement XII, provoked by the ecumenical nature of Freemasonry, issued a papal bull excommunicating Freemasons. Among other things, the Masons were accused of denying Christ's divinity (an accusation also levelled against the Knights Templar in 1307). In his condemnation of Masonry, the Pope also claimed that the

28. Heinrich Schneider, 57.

29. Ibid., 100.

30. Edmond Mazet, "Freemasonry and Esotericism," in Faivre, Modern Esoteric Spirituality, 249.

31. Yates, Rosicrucian Enlightenment, 218.

forces behind Masonry were identical with those that incited the Reformation.³² (It has been suggested by some that the Rosicrucians were intended as a protestant counterpart to the Jesuits.³³)

In the final four decades of the eighteenth century legions of famous men in Germany aligned themselves with Masonry, including Bürger, Claudius, Fichte, Goethe, Herder, Klinger, Knebel, Lessing, Novalis, Rheinhold, Schelling, and Schiller. Many of these men published works dealing explicitly with Masonry. Fichte became a Mason in Zürich in 1793. There had been no lodge in Jena since 1764, so he joined the Günther Lodge of the Standing Lion at Rudolstadt in Thuringia (which was about eighteen miles from Jena). In 1799 Fichte worked with Ignaz Aurelius Fessler (1756-1839) on the development of various higher degrees for the lodge in Berlin.³⁴ As part of his work, Fichte wrote two lectures on the "Philosophy of Masonry," which he presented to Johann Karl Christian Fischer. In 1802-03, Fischer published the lectures as "Letters to Constant" in two volumes of a journal entitled Eleusinians of the Nineteenth Century, or Results of United Thinkers on the Philosophy and History of Freemasonry. The format of "letters" to Constant (a fictitious non-Mason) was imposed

32. Baigent, 184.

33. Weeks, Boehme, 95.

34. See William R. Denslow, 10,000 Famous Freemasons (Trenton, MO: The Educational Bureau of the Royal Arch Mason Magazine, 1958), Vol. 2, 46.

on the text by the publisher, along with other arbitrary and ill-conceived changes. The lectures have since been published in a form that approximates Fichte's original, though his manuscripts have been lost.³⁵ In 1778, Lessing published his Ernst and Falk: Dialogues for Freemasons (Freimaurergespräche). Lessing's Nathan the Wise (1779), a play with some broadly construed Masonic themes was a great influence on Hegel.³⁶ Among other things, the play presses the Masonic theme of a unity of the world's religions, and thus of an "Invisible Church." In Act IV, scene 7, the Christian Friar praises Nathan, a Jew:

Friar: O Nathan, Nathan! You're a Christian soul! By God a better Christian never lived!

Nathan: And well for us! For what makes me for you a Christian, makes yourself for me a Jew!

The first letter we possess of Goethe's, written in 1764 when he was sixteen, has him applying earnestly for admission to a Masonic lodge.³⁷ He was not permitted Masonic membership, however, until 1780, when, on June 23 he was initiated into a lodge in Weimar. In 1782 he was

35. Roscoe Pound, Masonic Addresses and Writings of Roscoe Pound (New York: Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Company, 1953), 111-113; Pound also prints a translation of Fichte's text, pages 130-198.

36. H.S. Harris, Hegel's Development, Vol. I: Toward the Sunlight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 38.

37. Richard Friedenthal, Goethe (London: Weidenfeld, 1963), 31.

the recipient of "Higher Templar Degrees of the Rite of Strict Observance."

The Masonic lodges differed in what messages they imparted to their members. Many were undeniably Hermetic or mystical in character, and politically conservative. However, some were vehicles of Enlightenment secularism and rationalism,³⁸ and by the end of the eighteenth century these had grown in number tremendously. Nevertheless, many lodges still engaged in "mystification" (as critics called it). "Strict Observance" was primarily held responsible for Masonry's "descent into the fantastic." Klaus Epstein writes that the Strict Observance degrees

went far beyond the simple structure (apprentices, journeymen, and masters) which English Masonry drew from the guild system. Four new degrees were invented in France around 1740: Scottish knights, novices, Templar knights proper, and Eques professor. Only men of the upper classes (preferably aristocrats) were ordinarily initiated into these degrees under the Strict Observance, and the initiation rites were far more elaborate than ordinary Masonic ceremonies. Knights were required to wear elaborate armor, and the ritual was composed in a sonorous and old-fashioned

38. Frederick C. Beiser, The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987), 45.

Latin. The romantic and pseudo-medieval character of the proceedings was unmistakable, and the true Masonic "enlightened" spirit of rationality, utility, and equality had disappeared.³⁹

According to Heinrich Schneider, the German Masonic lodges were "teeming with magical, theosophical, mystical notions."⁴⁰ Schneider notes that much of their lore was Kabbalistic in origin.⁴¹ The German Masonic movement was strongly influenced by the writings of the French Maçon and Böhmean, Louis Claude de Saint Martin (see Chapter Two).⁴² Around 1770, the year of Hegel's birth, a "Hermetic Rite" was established, based upon the doctrines of the Hermetica.⁴³ Hermes Trismegistus himself appears in such German Masonic rites of the eighteenth century as that of the "Magi of Memphis."⁴⁴ In general, the higher degrees of Masonry were (and are) marked by a strongly mystical, gnostic character.⁴⁵ Heinrich Schneider has claimed that the Enlightenment is partly responsible for this. The Enlightenment quest for universal knowledge and power over

39. Klaus Epstein, The Genesis of German Conservatism (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), 87.

40. Heinrich Schneider, 22.

41. Ibid., 102.

42. Gerald Hanratty, "Hegel and the Gnostic Tradition: II," Philosophical Studies (Ireland), 31 (1986-87): 301-325; 317.

43. Faivre, Access to Western Esotericism, 80.

44. Faivre, Eternal Hermes, 189. Faivre notes that the rite may originally have been French in origin.

45. Heinrich Schneider, 78.

nature naturally led to a revival of mysticism and occultism, for these had always promised to deliver just those boons. In a reaction against the implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) anti-spiritual, anti-religious rationalism of modern science, certain individuals sought a truer enlightenment in Hermeticism, and hoped to make these secret societies into secret weapons. Schneider writes:

Long before Kant's important answers to the great problems of human life, the mystics in the secret societies had transformed these societies into anti-Enlightenment organizations and, in thus keeping alive the mystical traditions, had made possible the later merging of German idealism and mysticism . . . This mystical movement was the conservative revolution of the eighteenth century, and if in its beginnings its character was not exactly Christian, it was undoubtedly religious.⁴⁶

The individuals known as the Illuminati were the reaction to this reaction. The Illuminati were founded in 1776 as a means to advance the ideals of the Enlightenment: scientific rationalism, opposition to traditional religion and superstition, advocacy of the rights of man, opposition to feudalism, etc. Initially they were led by their

46. Heinrich Schneider, 76-77.

founder, Adam Weishaupt (1784-1830), a law professor at the Bavarian University of Ingolstadt. Weishaupt, however, proved inept at organization and he soon delegated a great deal of authority to Freiherr Adolph von Knigge (1752-1796), who mounted a highly successful membership drive in 1781. Weishaupt's jealousy of Knigge's abilities led to their break three years later. Weishaupt appears to have endowed the order with Hermetic trappings merely as window dressing, to entice members and, perhaps, to discourage the authorities from investigating.⁴⁷ Members were encouraged to believe that their superiors possessed some special secret which they would be made privy to in time.

At its height, the Illuminati included litterati like Goethe and Herder, as well as numerous other public figures and members of the aristocracy: Karl-August, Duke of Weimar, the Prussian reformer Karl von Hardenberg, Duke Ferdinand of Braunschweig, Duke Ernst of Gotha, the publisher C.F. Cotta, Count Johann Cobenzl, and many

47. Epstein quotes its 1781 statute: "The Order will seek to remain clandestine as much as possible, for whatever is secret and hidden has a special attraction for men: it attracts the interest of outsiders and enhances the loyalty of insiders. It gives superiors a special opportunity to judge the conduct of men in the lower grades under circumstances where they do not know that they are being observed. It also gives the Order some protection from the impertinent curiosity of spies. Its noble purposes can be thwarted less easily and any thirst for power which may exist on the part of superiors can be repressed more easily." (Epstein, 91). Epstein's account of the history of the Illuminati and its suppression makes for fascinating reading. My account here is primarily a summary of the information he presents. See Epstein, 88-95; 100-04.

others. The Order thus managed to insinuate itself into the governments of Austria and Germany. Not surprisingly, Weishaupt and company made the infiltration of the educational system a top priority. The staff of the Karlsschule in Stuttgart included several Illuminati.

The influence of the Order was short-lived, however. In 1784 Elector Karl Theodor of Bavaria issued a proclamation commanding the Order to disband. In 1785 Weishaupt was forced out of his professorship at Ingolstadt and went to live with a friend, Jakob Lanz, in Regensburg. While out walking together one day they were caught in a sudden downpour and Lanz was struck by lightning. The Illuminati membership list was found on his body, constituting proof positive that the Order had defied the Elector's proclamation. The Elector then issued a second proclamation commanding all Illuminati to register with the government and promising a full pardon if they did so. This put the Order in a terrific bind. The members could not possibly know how complete a list the government had obtained, so if they registered they risked imprisonment or worse (if Karl Theodor's promise was disingenuous). On the other hand, if they did not register, and their names did happen to be on the list, they risked imprisonment (or worse). In this impossible situation the Order self-destructed, as most members chose to obey the Elector's edict. Although rumors of the influence of the Illuminati

continue to this day, it was never--so far as we know--officially reactivated, and if it was reactivated there is no evidence that it regained anything like the influence it had from 1776 to 1785.

Most of the Illuminati were also Masons. Jacques D'Hondt in his Hegel Secret provides a fascinating discussion of the influence of the Enlightenment ideals and terminology of the Illuminati on the young Hegel.⁴⁸ I shall discuss some his conclusions in section four, as well as in Chapter Seven.

2. Goethe the Alchemist

The life of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) provides a fascinating case study of an eighteenth century Hermeticist. His example makes it vividly clear that an eminent scientist and man of letters could still be deeply immersed in Hermeticism as late as the second half of the eighteenth century.

Ronald Gray, who has produced an entire study of the influence of alchemy on Goethe, writes that "At the time of Goethe's birth, in . . . Mannheim, alchemy was all the rage. Many of the most respectable citizens had established alchemical laboratories, and so widespread was the enthusiasm that the city authorities felt themselves obliged to suppress it by law, on the grounds that the

48. See Jacques D'Hondt, Hegel Secret (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), 62-114.

numerous ill-guarded fires and the waste of labour and materials were dangerous, and harmful to the economy of the state."⁴⁹ As a young man, Goethe read Paracelsus, Basil Valentine, van Helmont, Swedenborg and the Kabbalah.⁵⁰ In particular, as Gray notes, Goethe was influenced by an anonymous alchemical work entitled Aurea Catena Homeri (ca. 1723).⁵¹ Goethe's letter to E. Th. Langer of May 11, 1770 discusses the Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus.⁵² Goethe's notebook from Frankfurt and Strasbourg contains many references to Paracelsus and Agrippa.⁵³ According to Richard Friedenthal, for Goethe "alchemy was a thing of the present, not of the past, a still living survival from the middle ages."⁵⁴ Indeed, Gray claims that "The degree to which alchemy had established control over Goethe's interests in early manhood can scarcely be over-emphasized."⁵⁵

In September of 1768, Goethe, exhausted, took leave from Leipzig University and spent the winter at home. He was much of the time in the company of Susanna von Klettenberg, who belonged to the sect of Herrnhuter, a

49. Ronald Gray, Goethe the Alchemist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 4.

50. Friedenthal, 66-68; see also Gray, 5.

51. Gray, 5.

52. Ibid., 182.

53. Ibid., 6.

54. Friedenthal, 67. See also Gray's entire Goethe the Alchemist. Gray claims that Goethe probably encountered much of alchemy in a Böhmanian formulation, though he probably never encountered Böhme's thought directly.

55. Gray, 7.

pietist movement founded by the notorious Hermeticist Count von Zinzendorf (1700-1760). An alchemical adept, Klettenberg introduced Goethe to the Opus Mago-Cabbalisticum et Theosophicum of Georg von Welling.⁵⁶ Together, they engaged in alchemical experiments in the attic of Goethe's father's house. Friedenthal describes their work in dramatic detail:

The pious Fräulein von Klettenberg stood with the young Goethe in front of a wind furnace, with sand-bath and chemical flasks. They stirred up the 'ingredients of Macrocosm and Microcosm.' They tried to produce silicic acid by melting quartz pebbles from the river Main. They discussed mysterious salts, to be conjured up by unheard-of means, a 'virgin soil' with extraordinary powers . . . Even in his [later] natural science he remained far truer to the world of prima materia and the Chemical Marriage, as the textbook of the Rosicrucians was called, than subsequent opinion has been willing to admit.⁵⁷

56. This work was based on Paracelsus and Böhme. Goethe is also known to have read Kabbalistic works. See Friedenthal, 66.

57. Friedenthal, 67; In Hegel's lectures on the Philosophy of Nature of 1803, he discusses a "Virgin Earth," mentioning in this context "the elders," whom H.S. Harris argues refers to Paracelsus, Böhme, and the alchemists. See H.S. Harris, Hegel's Development, Vol. II: Night Thoughts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 274.

In later years, Goethe was far more critical of alchemy: "It is a misuse of genuine and true ideas, a leap from the ideal, the possible, to the reality, a false application of genuine feelings, a lying promise, which flatters our dearest hopes and aspirations."⁵⁸ However, Goethe's disapproval appears to have extended only to the actual practice of laboratory alchemy. He continued to be influenced by alchemical theory and symbolism. In 1795 he composed an alchemical fairy tale laden with Hermetic imagery of all sorts--such as, for instance, the image of the ouroboros (the snake biting its tail). It is not possible to describe this fascinating text in detail here.

The conception of a unity of the world's religions is joined in Goethe's thought, as it is in the ideology of Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry, with a quasi-pantheistic nature mysticism. In words that call to mind Schiller's poem Die Freundschaft (1782) which is quoted--or rather deliberately misquoted--by Hegel in the final passage of the Phenomenology of Spirit, Goethe writes in the Sorrows of the Young Werther (1774):

From the inaccessible mountains across the desert that no foot has trodden, and on to the end of the unknown ocean, breathes the spirit of the eternally creating One, rejoicing in every speck of dust that hears Him

58. Quoted in Gray, 66-67.

and is alive. --Ah, in those days, how often did my longing take the wings of a crane that flew overhead and carried me to the shore of the uncharted sea, to drink from the foaming cup of the infinite that swelling rapture of life, and to taste but for an instant, despite the limited force of my soul, one drop of the bliss of that being which produces all things in and by means of itself.⁵⁹

David Walsh notes that "Goethe made frequent use of the idea of unifying opposites in the sense derived from the alchemical symbolism, both in his literary and scientific writings."⁶⁰ His aim, as Gray puts it, was "an incorruptible permanence which embraces in itself all opposites."⁶¹ Goethe writes: "I was pleased to imagine to myself a divinity [Gottheit] which reproduces itself from all eternity, but since production cannot be thought of without multiplicity [Mannigfaltigkeit], this divinity necessarily appeared to itself at once as a Second Person [ein Zweites], whom we recognize by the name of the Son."⁶² The similarity to Böhme's doctrine is obvious here.⁶³

59. Goethe, The Sorrows of the Young Werther, trans. Bayard Quincy Morgan (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1957), 69.

60. See David Walsh, The Esoteric Origins of Modern Ideological Thought: Böhme and Hegel (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1978), 326.

61. Gray, 11-12.

62. Quoted in Gray, 50.

63. The more immediate source may have been the thought of Oetinger. See Robert Schneider, Schellings und Hegels

Goethe continues, speaking of the Father and Son: "These two had now to continue the act of creation, and appeared to themselves again as a Third Person [im Dritten], who was now just as living and eternal as the whole. But with this the circle of divinity was closed, and even they would have found it impossible to create again a being fully equal to themselves."⁶⁴

Gray has described Goethe's color-theory as "entirely alchemical in conception."⁶⁵ The color-theory, which had a great influence on Hegel's later Naturphilosophie, was influenced by the alchemical teaching that all colors arise from the opposition of darkness and light.⁶⁶ Goethe himself acknowledges the influence of alchemy on the Farbenlehre: "He who ponders this matter more deeply," Goethe states, "will be so much the better able to relate these remarks with the secret philosophy and experience of the chemists."⁶⁷ Furthermore, Goethe acknowledged the importance of the form of "triplicity" in his color-theory, a triplicity which, of course, figures prominently in Hegel and, as we have seen, in Böhme and his followers: "If one has rightly understood the separation of blue and yellow," Goethe states, "and has sufficiently considered in particular the development towards red, whereby the opposed

schwäbische Geistesansichten (Würzburg-Aumühle: Konrad Triltsch Verlag, 1938), 136.

64. Quoted in Gray, 50.

65. Ibid., 128.

66. Walsh, Boehme and Hegel, 94.

67. Quoted in Gray, 127.

sides incline towards one another and combine in a third being, then a certain secret significance will become apparent, to wit that a spiritual meaning can be read into these two separated and opposed beings, and one will scarcely refrain, when one sees them producing green below, and red above, from thinking in the former case of the earthly, and in the latter case of the heavenly creatures of the Elohim."⁶⁸

Goethe's botanical theory, the doctrine of the so-called Urpflanze, is also heavily influenced by Böhme and alchemy. Goethe's search for the Urpflanze led him to postulate a sequence of seven stages of plant development, moved by the twin forces of "Diastole" and "Systole." Rolf Christian Zimmerman has argued that Goethe's conceptions of "Diastole" and "Systole" derive from Oetinger's conceptions of expansion and contraction.⁶⁹ Robert Schneider speaks of

68. Quoted in Gray, 122. Gray (p. 110) informs us that "colours were explained by Goethe as finite and determinate entities arising from the limitation of an infinite and undetermined light." This seems strikingly like Isaac Luria's Kabbalistic doctrine of the tsimtsum (see Chapter Seven). It is interesting to note that none other than Werner Heisenberg argued in 1941 that Goethe's theory is completely legitimate as a phenomenological description of the experience of color, which should be seen as complementing Newton's purely physicalistic account. See Heisenberg, "Die Goethesche unter die Newtonsche Farbenlehre im Lichte der modernen Physik," in Wandlungen in den Grundlagen der Naturwissenschaft, 4th ed. (Leipzig, 1943), 58-76.

69. Rolf Christian Zimmerman, Das Weltbild des jungen Goethe: Studien zur hermetischen Tradition des deutschen 18. Jahrhunderts, 2 vols. (Munich: Fink, 1969, 1979), 1:187. Oetinger actually employed the terms "Systole" and "Diastole." The "contraction/expansion" theory originates, not surprisingly, with Böhme. See David Walsh The

these concepts as part of the "old vitalistic tradition" and points out that they crop up later in Schelling's Weltalter.⁷⁰ David Walsh has also compared Goethe's seven stages to Böhme's seven source-spirits.⁷¹

The Urpflanze is conceived by Goethe as a microcosm of the universe.⁷² The seven stages of plant development mirror the seven stages of the unfolding and division of creation as a whole. Goethe writes: "Anything that enters the world of phenomena must divide, in order to appear at all. The separated parts seek one another again, and may find each other and be reunited But the union can also occur in the higher sense, whereby the separated parts are first developed and heightened, so that the combination of the two developed sides produces a third, higher being."⁷³ But all the parts and stages are simply the modes of one fundamental form. Goethe believed that each stage of the plant's development was understandable as a transformation of the primordial leaf. Gray writes that Goethe held this observation (which has been disputed by most botanists) to be "confirmation of his belief that the

Mysticism of Innerwordly Fulfillment: A Study of Jacob Böhme (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1983), 60-61.

70. R. Schneider, 103. For the Weltalter passages see F.W.J. Schelling, Sämtliche Werke, Vol. 8, ed. K.F.A. Schelling (Stuttgart and Augsburg, 1856-58), 231, 320, 327.

71. Walsh, Boehme and Hegel, 94.

72. Gray, 96.

73. Ibid., 91.

whole was present in all of its parts."⁷⁴ Again, we are reminded of a similar position in Hegel. Goethe also believed in the reality of an Urtier, of which all animals are modifications, though he did not develop this theory as extensively as he did that of the Urpflanze.

Goethe was an active and enthusiastic Mason. He even composed songs and orations in honor of deceased Masonic brethren, in which he elaborated his own views of the true mission of Masonry.⁷⁵ Some of these views may be inferred from his 1784 fragment Die Geheimnisse, a fable about a spiritual order of knights (modelled, it seems, on the Templars). The knights are led by a Humanus, who unites in his person the underlying "truth" of the various religious faiths--again, we find the conception of the "Invisible Church." Some lines from Die Geheimnisse make it clear what tradition he was drawing on:

The cross stands with roses thick entangled
 Who has bedecked the rose cross?
 The garland swells, round on all sides,
 Adorning the rough wood with softness.

And further:

And light silver clouds soar,

74. Ibid., 74.

75. Heinrich Schneider, 123.

With cross and roses rising,
 And out of the middle issues a Holy Life,
 Threefold rays, surging out of a central point.⁷⁶

As a young man, Goethe dallied with other secret societies, some of a decidedly frivolous bent. In 1772 Goethe's father arranged for him to be established as a young attorney in Wetzlar. There, at the inn Zum Kronprinzipen, Goethe made the acquaintance of a group of young assessors, who, according to Friedenthal, formed a "Band of Knights," taking old Germanic names. Goethe's name was "Goetz the upright." They were led by a "Grand Master" and held "ceremonies for the conferment of knighthoods" as well as "knightly picnics" in the country.⁷⁷ One of these men, a certain von Goue, founded several Masonic lodges, as well as another circle, the "Order of Transition" whose fourth and highest mystical degree was called "Transition of Transition to Transition of Transition."⁷⁸

Goethe's name and reputation served to lend a measure of respectability to Hermeticism throughout his lifetime.

76. Gray, 200. My translations. Gray explicitly refers to the work as a "poem on Rosicrucianism" (pp. 63-64).

77. Friedenthal, 111. In Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship Goethe speaks of the fascination in Germany in the mid-1700's with medieval knights. See Goethe, Collected Works, vol. 9, Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship, trans. Eric A. Blackall (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 69.

78. Friedenthal, 112.

Many were undoubtedly introduced to aspects of Hermeticism through Goethe, and his work was a major conduit for the indirect influence of alchemy, Böhme, Kabbalah, etc.

3. Swabian Pietism and F.C. Oetinger

Laurence Dickey has argued recently that the approach of going "back to the text" with Hegel's work is misguided, for so much of the intellectual context of what Hegel wrote is unfamiliar to us.⁷⁹ Dickey argues that Hegel must be understood in the context of what he calls the "Protestant civil piety" of old-Württemberg. This tradition involves, among other things, the goal of establishing the kingdom of God on earth through a transformation of society. Robert Schneider, in fact, refers to the "kingdom of God" (Das Königreich Gottes) as the "consummate idea" of Swabian pietism.⁸⁰

Schneider's Schellings und Hegels Schwäbische Geistessahnen was the first major study of the influence of Swabian theosophy on German idealism. He refers to the widespread scholarly ignorance of Hegel's Swabian roots as an "embarrassing situation" (Zwangslage).⁸¹ Schneider argues that Schelling and Hegel were influenced by such

79. Laurence Dickey, Hegel: Religion, Economics, and the Politics of Spirit 1770-1807 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), vii-viii.

80. R. Schneider, 146. See Chapter Seven for a discussion of the "Kingdom of God" in relation to Hegel, Schelling, and Hölderlin.

81. Ibid., 5.

aspects of Swabian cultural life as the Geschichtstheologie of Johann Coccejus (1603-1669), mystical pantheism, Paracelsism, and theosophical Naturphilosophie (especially that of the Böhmean F.C. Oetinger).⁸² In Hegel's own time his Swabianism was the subject of some discussion, as well as ridicule.⁸³ Karl Rosenkranz writes that "In Berlin it was the case that much that was attributed to Hegel as an individual was typical of all Swabians, and was not regarded as being in any way peculiar to him so long as he lived in the south of Germany. This is true of his homely, unpretentious manner, his intuitive openness, the pointedness of his speech, and the straightforwardness, matter-of-factness and sincerity of his mental attitude."⁸⁴ In the year following Hegel's death, O.H. Gruppe (writing under the pseudonym "Absolutulus von Hegelingen") played Aristophanes to Hegel's Socrates with his play, The Wind, or an Entirely Absolute Construction of World History Through Oberon's Horn, in which Hegel's Swabian origins were lampooned. Understanding Hegel's Swabian roots is

82. Ibid., 2.

83. Once when Hegel and Victor Cousin were in Paris together they attended a performance of a play starring a captivating young actress by the name of Mlle. Mars. Hegel expressed the desire to be introduced to her, but Cousin begged off, confiding to a friend that he feared she would find Hegel's manner of speaking [Sprechweise] laughable. See Hegel in Berichten seiner Zeitgenossen, ed. Günther Nicolini (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1970), 349.

84. Karl Rosenkranz, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), 22.

indispensable for making sense out of his philosophical presuppositions and attachments.

The Duchy of Württemberg became Protestant in 1534, despite its being surrounded mainly by Southern German states of a decidedly Catholic bent. The natural outcome of this was that Württemberg became quite insular. The Duchy became fertile ground for many forms of Protestant religious enthusiasm, including mysticism and Hermeticism. Indeed, the Swabians are the mystical people of Germany, notorious for their interest in esoteric, theosophical, and occult strains of thought. Reuchlin, Andreae, Oetinger, Hahn, Mesmer, Schiller, Schelling, Hegel and Hölderlin were all Swabians. Wiedmann writes of the Swabians, "Reserved and uncommunicative, they conceal deep within themselves a quiet faculty for brooding and meditating."⁸⁵ Pierre Deghaye states that "Swabia is accustomed to reconciling opposites."⁸⁶ Württemberg, Laurence Dickey claims, was a land of "both-and" rather than "either-or."⁸⁷ "The Swabians," writes Heinrich Schneider, "always search for the totality of being behind the reality with its confusing multiformity, and beyond the rationale with its sharp antithesis of truth and Essence."⁸⁸ Robert Schneider

85. Franz Wiedmann, Hegel: An Illustrated Biography, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Pegasus, 1968), 14.

86. Pierre Deghaye, "Jacob Böhme and His Followers" in Modern Esoteric Spirituality, 236.

87. Dickey, 11.

88. R. Schneider, 62-63. Here Schneider is actually explicating the views, with which he is in sympathy, of

writes of the Swabian "mental attitude" (Geisteshaltung) which continually points towards die Ganzheit des Seins.⁸⁹

Even well into the nineteenth century, little of the dominant philosophy of Enlightenment had seeped in. David Walsh writes: "The influence of the Enlightenment, to the extent it had made itself felt in Württemberg, was integrated with a theosophic philosophy of nature and a speculative pietism which was concerned with the progressive revelation of the divine structure of history."⁹⁰ Indeed, for this reason, Robert Schneider holds that the influence of the Aufklärung on the young Hegel has been very much exaggerated.⁹¹ We may think of biblical scholarship and "speculative philosophy" as widely different activities, but to the pietists of Württemberg they were intimately connected.⁹²

Just what exactly is "speculative pietism"? Defining pietism itself is rather difficult. Lewis White Beck writes that pietism "was the public re-emergence of a more or less continuous effort in Germany to achieve a simpler, less dogmatic, and more moralistic Christianity than that to be found in any of the established churches."⁹³ This is

H.O. Burger in his Schwabentum in der Geistesgeschichte (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1933).

89. R. Schneider, 23.

90. Walsh, Boehme and Hegel, 296.

91. R. Schneider, 7.

92. See Peter C. Erb, Editor's Introduction, Pietists: Selected Writings (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 17.

93. Lewis White Beck, Early German Philosophy (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1969), 157.

indeed the case, for these "pietist" concerns are to be found in such German mystics as Eckhart, Seuse, Tauler, Joachim, and others.

Pietism existed in different forms, and was inspired by a variety of sources. One highly significant source of inspiration was the thought of Jakob Böhme.⁹⁴ By the end of the seventeenth century, Böhme's followers had become a thorn in the side of the established church. In Württemberg in 1681 Pastor Johann Jakob Zimmerman of Bietigheim was dismissed from his post for "Böhmeanism." A similar fate befell Ludwig Brunnquell of Grossbotwar in 1679.⁹⁵ Despite this, Böhmeans in Württemberg were generally treated with more tolerance than anywhere else in Germany.

The strain of "Böhmean pietism" became particularly strong in the eighteenth century, when many pietist thinkers became active opponents of the mathematical and mechanical model of science and advocated instead a Böhmean "vitalistic philosophy of nature."⁹⁶ These religious mystics, some of whom, like Böhme, had no formal education, came to exercise a wide influence, and by the middle of the eighteenth century, as Beck puts it, "a pietistic patina spread over almost all of German culture."⁹⁷ In addition to the open, pietist religious societies, which were

94. See Stoeffler, 168-171.

95. *Ibid.*, 109.

96. Beck, 159.

97. *Ibid.*, 10.

tolerated by the Duchy of Württemberg, secret societies flourished there as well.⁹⁸ Some of these societies were alchemical in nature. Alchemy was quite popular at the Württemberg court in the seventeenth century.⁹⁹ The Schwäbischen Magazin, one of the most important publications in Swabian literary life, published works on theosophy and alchemical Naturphilosophie including Ph. M. Hahn's anonymous work "Von Gottes Dreyeinigkeit und von der Versöhnung."¹⁰⁰

I will have more to say about the influence of Swabian pietism and Hermeticism on Schelling and Hegel in Section Four. In the rest of this section, I will discuss the life and thought of Oetinger, whom Robert Schneider regards as exercising considerable influence on both Schelling and Hegel.

Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702-1782) is virtually unknown to English-speaking scholars, even to scholars of Schelling and Hegel.¹⁰¹ Only a few excerpts from his works

98. Heinrich Schneider has drawn interesting parallels between German Freemasonry and pietist sects in his Quest for Mysteries, 48-49.

99. Yates, Rosicrucian Enlightenment, 27.

100. Ronald Gray notes that as a consequence of Böhme's influence on pietism, it is possible to say that "wherever in Germany pietism was strong . . . there was likely to be also some belief in the validity of alchemy" (Gray, 4).

101. One place English-speaking scholars have encountered Oetinger is in Hans-Georg Gadamer's Truth and Method, in which Oetinger's doctrine of sensus communis is discussed briefly. To be sure, Gadamer appropriates Oetinger for his own purposes, and says nothing of the role played by sensus communis in Oetinger's Böhmean theosophy. See Truth and Method, 2nd rev. ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 27-30, 485.

have ever been translated into English.¹⁰² Indeed, this is true for many of the pietists, who appear to be of interest almost exclusively to German scholars. Among those scholars there seems to be a concensus that Oetinger is the second most important figure in Württemberg pietism after Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752).¹⁰³ Stoeffler writes that "By most estimates [Oetinger] was, in fact, the most original theologian of the eighteenth century in Württemberg, and perhaps in all of Germany."¹⁰⁴ Robert Schneider has characterized Bengel as "the philosopher of history who anticipated the work of Schelling and Hegel."¹⁰⁵ Bengel believed that he was the herald of a "final age" of man in which God would achieve perfect self-actualization in the world, history would end, and all reality would be absorbed into God. Specifically, Bengel held that this would occur in 1836. Bengel and his followers, who called themselves "The Free" (Die Freien), proclaimed the perennial ideal of the "Invisible Church," which would prepare man for the end of time. (I will have more to say about Bengel in Chapter Seven.)

Oetinger, after undergoing a conversion experience in 1721, entered the theological seminary in Tübingen, where Hegel would study sixty-seven years later. A major influence on Oetinger in this period was Georg Bernhard

102. See Erb, Pietists: Selected Writings, 275-287.

103. Stoeffler, 107.

104. Ibid., 107.

105. R. Schneider, 38.

Bilfinger (1693-1750), a student of Wolff who taught Oetinger the thought of Leibniz, Wolff and Malebranche. Oetinger was decidedly unimpressed by their rationalism and mechanism, however, and yearned for something else. Discussing his intellectual frustrations with Johann Kaspar Oberberger, the proprietor of the powder mill in Tübingen, the latter gave Oetinger the works of Jakob Böhme. It was not long before Oetinger openly declared himself a disciple of Böhme.¹⁰⁶ Ten years after coming to Tübingen he would publish a work in defense of Böhme, Halatophili Irenai. Vorstellung wie viel Jakob Böhmes Schriften zur lebendigen Erkenntnis beitragen (1731).

Oetinger was greatly influenced by Eirenaeus (or Eugenius) Philaletha's Der Eingang zum Palast. Written in the first half of the seventeenth century, in the eighteenth it became, according to Rolf Christian Zimmerman, one of the most influential of all alchemical texts.¹⁰⁷ Oetinger is also known to have visited a circle of Jewish Kabbalists at Frankfurt am Main, who introduced him to Knorr von Rosenroth's Cabala Denudata, as well as to the messianic Kabbalism of Isaac Luria. Through Oetinger, Luria's Kabbalah would exercise an indirect influence on idealism.¹⁰⁸ His familiarity with Kabbalism enabled

106. Deghaye, 236.

107. Zimmerman, 103.

108. See Walsh, Boehme and Hegel, 99: "Oetinger commented on the similarity between Luria's theosophic speculation and that of Böhme, whom he considered to have presented a clearer statement of it." Also, see Ernst Benz, Der

Oetinger to appreciate what was "Kabbalistic" in Böhme's works, and to attempt to effect a synthesis of Böhme and Kabbalism. This tendency is reflected in one of Oetinger's most important works, Öffentliches Denckmal der Lehrtafel (1763). This was a commentary on a Kabbalistic painting hanging in a small church at Teinach-les-Bans in the Black Forest, which had been commissioned by Princess Antonia of Württemberg. Antonia was a follower of a Christian Kabbalist pastor whose Kabbalism had been formed through a reading of Reuchlin.¹⁰⁹ Oetinger also published a two volume work on Emanuel Swedenborg, Swedenborgs und anderer irdische und himmlische Philosophie, zur Prüfung des Bestens (1765), a work which was banned in Württemberg.

Oetinger was also an accomplished scientist, quite learned in the theories of his time. In the spirit of Böhmean vitalism he composed a "theology of electricity."¹¹⁰ An enthusiastic chiliast, in the tradition of Joachim de Fiore (a point to which I will

Christliche Kabbala (Zurich, 1958), pp. 32-34, and Stoeffler, 108. Andrew Weeks writes that "The reader of [Gershom] Scholem's Die Jüdische Mystik is forcefully impressed by what could well have been sources of Böhme's mysticism. In Böhme's second book, this applies to the vision of a divine, world-creating construction, resembling the kabbalistic [Lurianic] zimzum, and to his treatment of the Kabbalistic myth of the first Adam (Adam Kadmon)." Weeks, Boehme, 232

109. See Ernst Benz, The Mystical Sources of German Romantic Philosophy, trans. Blair R. Reynolds and Eunice M. Paul (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1983), 47.

110. See Ernst Benz, The Theology of Electricity, trans. Wolfgang Taraba (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1989).

return in Chapter Seven), he also published a book of inspirational sermons--Reden nach dem Allgemeinen Wahrheitsgefühl (1758)--which became quite popular with the laity of Württemberg.

Oetinger holds that "God is an eternal desire for self-revelation" (eine ewige Begierde sich zu offenbaren).¹¹¹

He writes in one place that "The ancients [die Alten] saw God as an eternal process in which He emerges from Himself and returns to Himself; this is the true conception of God and of His Glory; it is the true conception of His infinite life and power which issues in the Blessed Trinity."¹¹²

Oetinger identifies the fully-realized God with Geist, and treats Geist as what he calls an Intensum. An Intensum is a complex whole which cannot be divided into separable pieces. In his Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch (1776), Wissen (to know) is defined as "to see (to understand, to penetrate) a thing according to all its parts." Glaube (belief, faith) is supposed to consist "not in suppressing the syllogistic order of thought but in enlivening it."¹¹³ Oetinger does not reject reason per se; he merely opposes a "living" to a "dead" reason. Putting

111. Quoted in R. Schneider, 136.

112. Quoted in Gerald Hanratty, "Hegel and the Gnostic Tradition: II," Philosophical Studies (Ireland), 31 (1986-87): 301-325; 314. His trans.

113. Quoted in Antoine Faivre, Access to Western Esotericism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 116.

the two definitions together, one can see that what Oetinger is after is a kind of thought that proceeds organically, or which aims at the articulation and grasp of organic wholes. We come to know the God-process through its articulation into moments or aspects, which are not conceived as separable pieces. Oetinger holds, in a manner identical to Hegel, that in the case of an Intensum such as Geist, the whole is immanent in every part. It is this immanence that enables us to progress from one moment to another in the gradual articulation of the whole.¹¹⁴

The "moments" of God represent the "forces" which bring about God's realization of Himself in the world, which consists in His corporealization or embodiment. Böhme's claim that no spirit exists "disembodied" is the linchpin of Oetinger's thought. God's telos (the telos of all of reality) is the creation of an indestructible corporeality. Oetinger writes: "Embodiment is the goal of God's work" (Leiblichkeit ist das Ende der Werke Gottes).¹¹⁵ Oetinger departs from the entire earlier philosophical tradition of idealism, by holding that spirit does not in any sense precede its embodiment. Rather, corporealization is conceived as a kind of specification, and the outcome of this process is a purely spiritual bodily existence--what Oetinger calls Geistleiblichkeit.¹¹⁶

114. See R. Schneider, 114.

115. Quoted in R. Schneider, 143.

116. The concept seems to originate with Paracelsus. See Andrew Weeks, Paracelsus: Speculative Theory and the Crisis

Each thing, each element of reality, is seen as progressively bringing about the creation of its own "counterpart" spirit body. In his Theologia ex idea vitae deducta (Theology Deduced from the Idea of Life) (1765) Oetinger argues that every human being strives by nature for perfection, which may be reached in the creation of a new spiritual body.¹¹⁷ Life is itself the dynamic drive for the creation of this indestructible body, which resembles in conception the Taoist "diamond body." The totality of these spiritual bodies constitutes God's body, which He must have "in order to be 'all in all.'"¹¹⁸

The forces which set in motion this process of cosmic "spiritual corporealization" are antagonistic and mutually-determining, and are derived in large measure from Oetinger's studies of the Kabbalah. As was common among Christian Kabbalists, Oetinger identifies the first three sephiroth of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life with the Trinity and states that they deal solely with the Godhead. The other seven relate to creation. Just as Böhme did, Oetinger refers to these seven as "seven spirits," and like Böhme he favors this way of speaking because it accords with scriptural references to the seven spirits of God

of the Early Reformation (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 114.

117. Oetinger writes "corporeality is not lack of perfection; it is perfection itself." Oetinger, Swedenborgs Irrdische und Himmlische Philosophie, Zur Prüfung des Bestens (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1765), 345.

118. Quoted Stoeffler, 113.

(e.g., Rev. 4:5). They are the mechanism of God's corporealization or manifestation as body, then as spirit-body. He conceives the supernal trinity as in some degree beyond understanding.

The two fundamental cosmic processes, according to Oetinger, are expansion (Ausbreitung), which he identifies with the fourth Kabbalist sephirah, Hesed ("mercy," also known by a name which Oetinger also uses, Gedulah), and contraction (Stärke), which he identifies with the fifth sephirah, Gevurah (judgment). Creation, and thus God's "embodiment" is set in motion by the primordial conflict of these two forces.

Central to Oetinger's theory of knowledge is his conception of Sensus Communis (also termed Warheitsgefühl), which he discusses most fully in Inquisitio in sensum communem et rationem (1753) and in Die Wahrheit des Sensus Communis (also 1753). In Oetinger's own words, Sensus Communis is "the feeling [Empfindung] which comes before investigation and piecemeal unfolding, and which carries with it certainty and assurance, prior to the disentangling of the manifold, distinguishable aspects."¹¹⁹ Sensus communis, Oetinger notes, "is concerned only with things that all men see daily before them, things that hold an entire society together, things that are concerned as much

119. Quoted in K.C.E. Ehmann, ed. Friedrich Christoph Oetinger's Leben und Briefe, als urkundlicher Kommentar zu dessen Schriften (1859), 199.

with truths and statements as with the arrangements and patterns comprised in statements."¹²⁰ Oetinger frequently refers to Sensus Communis as an "unmediated cognition" (unmittelbare Erkenntnis). Robert Schneider describes Sensus Communis as "the feeling of the deep, total bond [Verbundenheit] of man with God and with other beings."¹²¹ Sensus Communis cannot be defined with full clarity and precision because it in some sense transcends subject and object.¹²² Sensus Communis is understood by Oetinger to lie at the "very center" of our being--it is a state or a faculty which lies beyond the run-of-the-mill distinctions made by consciousness, including the distinction between consciousness and external world.

Oetinger also seems to understand Sensus Communis in terms of what he calls Zentralerkenntnis.¹²³ Oetinger writes that Zentralerkenntnis leads to the realization that "The truth is a whole [Die Wahrheit ist ein Ganzes]; when one finally receives this total, synoptic vision of the truth, it matters not whether one begins by considering this part or that."¹²⁴ As Robert Schneider points out, the

120. Oetinger, Die Wahrheit des sensus communis oder des allgemeinen Sinnes, in den nach dem Grundtext erklärten Sprüchen und Prediger Salomo oder das beste Haus- und Sittenbuch für Gelehrte und Ungelehrte (Tübingen, 1753). Quoted in Gadamer, 27.

121. R. Schneider, 124; my trans.

122. Stoeffler, 115.

123. Robert Schneider (p. 86) also points out that Zentralerkenntnis is an important concept for Bengel as well.

124. F.C. Oetinger, Sämtliche Schriften, Vol. 5, ed. Karl Chr. Eberh. Ehmman (Stuttgart, 1858-64), 45.

theme of the truth as a whole (or the whole) is a perennial theme of Swabian speculative pietism. It is for this reason, Schneider suggests, that Kant's scepticism was almost universally rejected and reviled in Württemberg.¹²⁵ Schneider writes that "there can no longer be any doubt, that in the [Tübingen] Stift, spurred on and enriched by the Enlightenment, the original spirit of the [Swabian] Heimat was at work, seeking the Truth only in the Whole."¹²⁶

Sensus Communis is an active process or state of mind which Oetinger describes as moving toward truth through a method of "showing" which he calls phenomenological.¹²⁷ What moves the phenomenological method, and constitutes the essence of Sensus Communis, is a "science" of the image derived from the occult and Hermetic philosophies, especially alchemy. Like the Jewish Kabbalists, Oetinger reads the entire text of the Bible as a "holy emblem book": every detail is in some way significant or symbolic. "To understand the metaphysics of the Bible," Oetinger writes, "it is essential to draw on the resources of alchemy Let us, therefore, avail of alchemy, since it will enable us to grasp the true meaning of the scriptures."¹²⁸ Oetinger deals with such Biblical "emblems" as Life, Light,

125. R. Schneider, 56.

126. Ibid., 54; my trans.

127. See, for instance, Oetinger's "Philosophie der Alten" (1762). For a discussion of the phenomenological method see R. Schneider, 58-60.

128. Quoted in Hanratty, 317, his trans.

Glory, Fire, Water, Blood, and Salt. Following Böhme, Oetinger extended this conception to include all of nature: "the natural realm, as well as scripture, is a medium of divine revelation, and . . . therefore the study of one will yield at least some insights into the other."¹²⁹ Nature, like the Bible, is an emblem-book, where everything is to be read as a sensuous representation of the divine. Since Nature is an emblem book--a sensualization of God in the world progressing toward true spiritual embodiment--scientific experiment or investigation into Nature are for Oetinger a way of "thinking God's thoughts."¹³⁰ Oetinger referred to the science which studies these "emblems" as theologia emblematica, and claimed when it was fully realized it would unify the sciences and all of human knowledge. One author refers to it as "an eclectic combination of alchemy, Böhme, the cabala, and emblematics . . . "¹³¹

There are obviously many parallels between Oetinger's thought and Hegel's. The foregoing discussion of Oetinger should have made some of these obvious, but I will offer a brief summary (further parallels will be drawn in later chapters). First there is Oetinger's ideal of an unmediated cognition beyond subject and object; there is

129. Stoeffler, 110.

130. Stoeffler, 114.

131. Priscilla A. Hayden-Roy, "A Foretaste of Heaven": Friedrich Hölderlin in the Context of Württemberg Pietism (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 1994), 46.

his conception of the truth as a "whole"; there is Oetinger's understanding of nature as a self-specification of God, and his treatment of natural philosophy as providing insight into God's mind; there is Oetinger's organicism, his conception of the intensum in which the whole is immanent in every part, and his ideal of an organic form of thought; there is the centrality in Oetinger's thought of Geist and his ideal of Geistleiblichkeit or "Spiritual Embodiment," which in Hegel becomes Objective and Absolute Spirit. Just as in Oetinger's thought, Hegel's God or the Idea is becoming progressively "better embodied." First it exists in inchoate form, in nature, then in human projects and institutions, in art, in religion, and then finally it reaches perfection in an ideal medium: the pure Aether of thought realized in speculative philosophy.

Two important followers of Oetinger were Johann Ludwig Fricker (1729-1766) and Philipp Matthaeus Hahn (1739-1790), both of whom studied at Tübingen. Fricker, along with other associates of Oetinger such as G.F. Rösler and Prokop Divisch, developed Oetinger's "theology of electricity," and may have exercised an influence on the notorious Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), another Swabian.¹³² (Oetinger was, in fact, the first German scholar to take note of Mesmer's theories.¹³³) However, perhaps the most

132. Faivre, Access to Western Esotericism, 77.

133. Benz, Theology of Electricity, 69.

influential follower of Oetinger was Hahn, whose theology was similar in most respects to Oetinger's. The young Hahn spent half a year at a vicarage in Herrenberg with Oetinger, who was by then quite ill. During his time there, he read Oetinger's voluminous alchemical library.¹³⁴ In 1770 Hahn, who had won the favor of Duke Karl Eugen for his design of an astronomical clock, became a pastor in Kornwestheim, north of Stuttgart. In 1781 he moved to Echterdingen, and died there nine years later. While at Echterdingen, he made frequent visits in the summer to Nörtingen, where he most probably came into contact with the young Schelling and Hölderlin.

Hahn attracted numerous followers from Stuttgart, where he established some conventicles (scriptural "study groups" for lay-pietists), including one exclusively composed of city officials and leading citizens.¹³⁵ Hahn was acquainted also with Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), whose own Hermeticism may well have been fueled by this contact with speculative pietism.¹³⁶ In 1774 Herder published Über die Älteste Urkunde des Menschgeschlechts, in which he devoted considerable space to a serious discussion of Hermes Trismegistus. The work concluded with a chapter dealing with, among other things, the Kabbalah. In 1801, in his journal Adrastea, Herder published a dialogue

134. Hayden-Roy, 55-56.

135. Ibid., 65.

136. R. Schneider (p. 10) claims that Herder was influenced by Oetinger.

between "Hermes and Pymander," styled after the dialogues found in the Corpus Hermeticum.¹³⁷

Despite Oetinger's influence, the church and academia remained largely closed to his followers. The Tübingen Stift, for instance, was intolerant of Oetingerites. Nevertheless, even there Oetinger exercised a subterranean influence. The metaphysical writings of Professor Gottfried Ploucquet (1716-1790) were strongly influenced by Oetinger's critique of Leibniz. Ploucquet did not, however, dare to cite Oetinger.¹³⁸

P.M. Hahn is not to be confused with Johann Michael Hahn (1759-1819), an influential disciple of Böhme, whose own life bore a number of parallels to that of the Lusatian cobbler. Hahn founded the Swabian "Hahnisch Fellowship" (Hahnische Gemeinschaft), the members of which were all conventionally religious laity, who just happened to meet every Sunday afternoon to discuss Hahn's brand of Böhmean theosophy.¹³⁹

137. Herder was a lifelong Hermeticist. In 1769, when he was only 25 years old, Herder wrote two essays in which he treated the universe as the body of God and God as the "idea of the world." He also advanced the microcosm-macrocosm thesis, held that human thoughts are a form in which God manifests Himself in the world, and claimed that the acquisition of theosophical wisdom gives one "power" over things. Klaus Vondung has discussed Herder's Hermeticism in fascinating detail. See Vondung, "Millenarianism, Hermeticism, and the Search for a Universal Science," in Science, Pseudo-Science, and Utopianism in Early Modern Thought, ed. Stephen McKnight (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992).

138. See R. Schneider, 47.

139. Stoeffler, 121.

4. Hegel's Lehrjahre

In the winter semester of 1788, Hegel began his studies at the Tübingen Stift, where J.V. Andreae, Oetinger, J.L. Fricker, and P.M. Hahn had studied. One will search his early writings, including the journal in German and Latin which he began keeping in 1785, in vain for signs of interest in Naturphilosophie, idealism, or any of the philosophical concerns of the time. Instead, as Lawrence Dickey has said, "it was the culture of Old-Württemberg, not the principles of German idealism, that furnished what Lucien Febvre would have called the 'mental equipment' of his mind."¹⁴⁰

We know fairly little about Hegel's religious education. In the gymnasium at Stuttgart (see Figure 9), Hegel had been taught J.W. Jager's Catechism, which was based on the thought of Bengel and Coccejus. Coccejus interpreted the progress of history in Biblical terms, holding that history was the "progressive realization of the divine plan."¹⁴¹ There is general agreement among scholars that Hegel must have had some degree of exposure to the strain of mysticism in Swabian pietism. Robert Schneider writes that Hegel and Schelling inhabited an entirely different "conceptual world" (Begriffswelt) from that of Enlightenment rationalism and mechanism. Theirs

140. Dickey, 6.

141. Walsh, Boehme and Hegel, 296.

was that of the "ancient categories of chemical (i.e., alchemical)-biological philosophy of nature" (die uralten Kategorien der chemisch (alchimistisch)-biologischen Naturphilosophie), stemming from "Oetinger, Böhme, van Helmont, Boyle, Fludd, Paracelsus, Agrippa von Nettesheim, Telesio, and others This philosophy of nature was still alive in Württemberg during Hegel and Schelling's youth."¹⁴² Wiedmann writes that, "Hegel's home, like that of every old, established family in Stuttgart up to the beginning of our century, was marked by Protestant Pietism. And thus Hegel was steeped in its theosophy and mysticism from childhood. His Swabian disposition was never rarefied--not even 'in the element of the universal, the ether of thought and philosophy.'¹⁴³ There was certainly easy access in Württemberg to theosophic literature. Important works by Oetinger and P. M. Hahn were still being brought out in the 1780's and 90's. Schneider notes that the works of Paracelsus and Böhme, as well as numerous alchemical works, were plentiful in Old-Württemberg.¹⁴⁴

In his publications, manuscripts, and youthful diaries Hegel says nothing about Swabian speculative pietism and theosophy, and nothing about figures such as Oetinger. This need not trouble us. Robert Schneider's hypothesis is, I think, quite reasonable: "worüber man ständig

142. R. Schneider, 20; my trans.

143. Wiedmann, 14. See also Karl Lütgert, Die Religion des deutschen Idealismus und ihr Ende (Gütersloh, 1923).

144. R. Schneider, 2.

spricht, schreibt man nichts in sein Tagebuch" ("wherever one speaks constantly, one does not write in one's diary").¹⁴⁵ In other words, the Begriffswelt of theosophy and Hermeticism was so much a part of normal life that it did not provoke comment from Hegel. Also, the example of Ploucquet (see the preceding section) is enough to show that there was concern among scholars that open alliance with Hermetic philosophy and figures such as Oetinger might provoke censure from their colleagues. Hermeticism was something of a "grass roots" movement in Württemberg--though, as I have shown, it exercised a clandestine influence in academia, the church, and government.

Robert Schneider writes that "Hegel's upbringing can only have been 'pietist.'" ¹⁴⁶ Although there is no record of his parents having been members of any pietist conventicle, Hegel's own youthful religious orientation seems to have been pietistic.¹⁴⁷ His "early theological writings" are alive with the sort of issues and questions

145. Ibid., 17.

146. R. Schneider, 16; my trans.

147. There was, of course, much in pietism that Hegel rebelled against throughout his life, in particular its denigration of knowledge in favor of faith. (The philosophy of Kant--whose pietist parentage is widely known--must certainly have been seen by Hegel as a systematization of everything wrong in pietism.) My contention is merely that Hegel was at the same time influenced by much else in pietism. Hegel's endorsement, late in life, of the work of Karl Friedrich Göschel (1784-1862), who attempted a kind of synthesis of Hegelianism and pietism, suggests that Hegel may have been more sympathetic to pietism than is often thought. See Butler, Hegel: The Letters, 537-546.

that were characteristic of Württemberg pietism. (Hegel scholars generally miss this, because they do not bother to investigate the culture of Hegel's Württemberg; they try and read Hegel as if the only influences on him were authors in the philosophical canon.) Whatever the exact nature of his parents' Lutheranism may have been, devout Lutherans they were. When Hegel would later come to develop philosophic interests, he saw the philosophies of Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte as outgrowths of Protestantism. Hegel's protestantism appears to have been sincere and in no way merely "orthopractic."

In particular, Hegel's mother appears to have been a strong influence. In a letter to Hegel's wife Marie, written after the philosopher's death, his sister Christianne reminisces about her brother, recalling that their mother had taught Hegel some Latin when he was a small child.¹⁴⁸ Some of the earliest entries in Hegel's journal consist in passages from religious and theological texts, laboriously copied out. As H.S. Harris writes, "a fifteen-year-old who . . . spends several days writing out someone else's views on heavenly bliss really does himself believe in heaven."¹⁴⁹ Harris writes that Hegel entered the theological seminary at Tübingen simply because he got his education there for free.¹⁵⁰ However, as far as we

148. See Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Stuttgart: Fr. Frommanns Verlag, 1936), 392.

149. Harris, Toward the Sunlight, 23.

150. Ibid., 64.

know Hegel did not consider studying anything other than theology.¹⁵¹ The picture that emerges from a study of his early days is that of a pious, almost deliberately conventional and conformist youth, in whom, nevertheless, were planted the mystical pietist seeds that would later bloom as "speculative philosophy."

We know that pietism exercised a considerable influence on the Tübingen Stift.¹⁵² Hegel's instructors there were actively concerned with how pietism could be reconciled with orthodox Lutheranism. At Tübingen Hegel read Plato, Kant, Schiller, Jacobi, Hemsterhuis, Montesquieu, and Herder. He declined to join a "Kant Club" formed at the Stift, because he claimed he was too busy reading Rousseau.¹⁵³ The later testimony of Magister Leutwein of the Stift indicates that Hegel had no interest in Kant or metaphysics while there.¹⁵⁴ Further, Harris has written of Hegel's early "indifference" to theoretical philosophy. This is what one would expect of someone who had been exposed early on to the heady air of theosophy--Schelling, for instance, could only stomach "mainstream" philosophy in so far as he could read theosophy into it.¹⁵⁵

Nevertheless, we know that some of Hegel's instructors had been influenced by Kant, particularly Gottlob Christian

151. Wiedmann, 15.

152. Stoeffler, 91.

153. Wiedmann, 19.

154. Dokumente, 430.

155. Harris, Toward the Sunlight, xviii.

Storr (1746-1805). Storr--who, according to Robert Schneider, was also influenced by Bengel¹⁵⁶--appears to have made much of Kant's claim to have "limited reason, in order to make room for faith."¹⁵⁷ Despite the fact that this would have supported the kind of quasi-pietistic, or simple, natural faith to which Hegel was attracted, he and Schelling (his roommate at the Stift, along with Hölderlin, beginning in 1790) appear to have reacted violently against it. This again suggests that their "pietist" religious upbringing was anything but conventional. Only a "speculative pietist" would have been so unmoved by Storr's appropriation of Kant, because speculative pietism believes in the possibility of wisdom--a knowledge of all things human and divine--and thus must reject sceptical philosophies such as Kant's.

As I mentioned earlier, Hegel's "early theological writings" are alive with the sort of issues and questions that were characteristic of Württemberg pietism. In the writings from the Stift period, Hegel maintains that unreflective "folk religion" is at root identical with the highest, reflective philosophical understanding of the nature of God. As Harris writes of Hegel's early notes on religion, "He is contrasting the healthy, undivided, natural consciousness of the Greeks with the corrupt, divided, artificial consciousness of the moderns; and this,

156. R. Schneider, 7.

157. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Bxxx.

too, is a contrast that he never abandoned."¹⁵⁸ The import of Hegel's position is clear, though he does not say it outright: true religion, true thought about the divine, is somehow already given to man in an unreflective way, in advance of anything like theoretical philosophy. Hegel finds in the Hebrew writings, especially Job, the same sort of simple, unreflective "connectedness" to the divine as he found in the Greeks.¹⁵⁹ Hegel's idolization of Greek culture has been overemphasized by most scholars. It is easy to see that the same "unreflective connectedness to the divine" was to be found also in the pietist milieu with which Hegel was acquainted from childhood on.

In the so-called "Tübingen fragment" (Religion ist eine) (1793), Hegel modifies his stance toward folk religion, and we now see Reason entering the picture, Enlightenment being reconciled with the happy unreflectiveness of the Volk. Hegel now holds that religious consciousness develops, and although the state of the Greeks and Hebrews represents a state of idyllic oneness with God, it is inferior insofar as it is an unthinking unity. The development of religious consciousness is a development toward a thinking reappropriation of relatedness to the divine. (We are reminded of Böhme's doctrine that the Fall had to happen, so that man could achieve a self-conscious at-one-ment with

158. Harris, Toward the Sunlight, 76.

159. Harris, Toward the Sunlight, 84.

God.) Hegel's position, as Harris notes, is to recognize the form of consciousness man has come to display over time as being the mature or most fully developed standpoint of man.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, there is no abandonment here of the idea that in some sense the realizations that will come with philosophical insight are already laid up in the mind in an inchoate form--something we appear to possess simply by virtue of being human. (It will be important to keep this idea in mind for the discussion which follows in the next chapter.) Indeed, Hegel maintains in this essay that "the heart" must be followed first, before philosophical consciousness is possible. He maintains that the "subjective religion" of all men is at root identical, and cites the line from Lessing's Nathan the Wise quoted earlier: "what makes me for you a Christian, makes yourself for me a Jew."¹⁶¹

In a letter from Hegel to Schelling dated January 1795, Hegel writes: "Reason and Freedom remain our watchword, and our rallying point the Invisible Church."¹⁶² I have already spoken of the use of the term "Invisible Church" by German mystics and by the Freemasons. H.S. Harris writes: "It seems to me virtually certain that for Hegel, at any rate, the 'invisible Church' originally referred to the cosmopolitan ideal of Freemasonry as

160. Ibid., 127.

161. The line "truth is not like stamped coin" in the Phenomenology (Miller, 22) is from Nathan, IV, 6.

162. Butler, 32; Hoffmeister #8.

envisaged by Lessing in Ernst und Falk."¹⁶³ Robert Schneider holds that Hegel's use of the term "Invisible Church," as well as the phrase "Kingdom of God" (which occurs in the same letter), is evidence of the influence of pietist theology.¹⁶⁴ Harris makes mention of a "secret club" at Tübingen, in which these Masonic ideals were discussed (although he thinks that the term "invisible Church" was not much used there).¹⁶⁵ Hegel was also influenced early on by the millenerian ideas of two French Masonic philosophes, Volney and Rabaut de Saint-Etienne.¹⁶⁶

In 1793, Hegel graduated from the Stift and in October he took a job as tutor in the home of C.F. Steiger von Tschugg in Berne. There, in his leisure time, he read Meister Eckhart, as well as Grotius, Hobbes, Hume, Leibniz, Locke, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Shaftesbury, Spinoza and Voltaire. He read Kant more seriously, particularly Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone. He also began studying Fichte's works and made preparations for working out a Philosophy of the Subjective Spirit. In 1795, encouraged by Schelling, with whom he remained in correspondence, Hegel appears to have become deeply immersed in Fichte's idealism. In an April 1795 letter to Schelling, Hegel refers to the conception of God as

163. Harris, Toward the Sunlight, 105.

164. R. Schneider, 41. A July 10, 1794 letter from Hölderlin to Hegel refers to "the Kingdom of God" as "our rallying cry" (Butler, Hegel: The Letters, 24).

165. Harris, Toward the Sunlight, 106.

166. See D'Hondt, Hegel Secret, 83-153.

Absolute Ego as a part of "esoteric philosophy."¹⁶⁷ In an August 1795 letter he makes it clear that he accepts this idea.¹⁶⁸

I have already mentioned that Fichte was a Mason, but his connections with the Hermetic tradition do not end there. There is a very strong similarity between Fichte's dialectic of Absolute Ego, Non-Ego, and Limited Ego and Non-Ego in the Science of Knowledge (1794) and the initial tripartite dialectic in Böhme's doctrine of the "seven source spirits." If Hegel began reading Böhme in this period (which is possible) he could not have failed to notice this similarity. Ernst von Bracken devoted an entire volume to discussing the relation of Fichte to Meister Eckhart.¹⁶⁹ Of this connection, David Walsh has written, "Fichte adopted the insights that had been formulated with the greatest difficulty by Eckhart as the union of the soul with God's creative power, to denote the normal condition of man in which the 'I' created the world by the power of thought and realized the action of God."¹⁷⁰

In Berne, Hegel became part of a family circle--meeting in the evening for various sorts of entertainment--with whom he kept in touch after he went to Frankfurt in

167. Butler, 35; Hoffmeister #11.

168. Butler, 41; Hoffmeister #14.

169. Ernst von Bracken, Meister Eckhart und Fichte (Würzburg: Konrad Triltsch Verlag, 1943). (Lest anyone think there is little to be said on this subject, it should be noted that Bracken's book is more than 650 pages long!)

170. Walsh, Boehme and Hegel, 318.

1797.¹⁷¹ Harris writes that "this association, like all of Hegel's subsequent connections in Frankfurt--as far as these can be traced--has strong overtones of Freemasonry."¹⁷² Hegel was an enthusiastic reader of the quasi-Masonic journal Minerva, which, among other things, disseminated the radical thought of the French Jacobin.¹⁷³ Its covers usually bore curious Masonic and chiliastic inscriptions. For instance, one cover featured the owl of Minerva flying over Greek columns, next to which stands a child holding a trowel (an important Masonic symbol). In the shade of a tree stands a woman surrounded by children. Next to her is a shield on which is the head of Medusa and the inscription Die gegenwärtige Zeit ist schwanger mit der Zukunft ("The present time is pregnant with the future").¹⁷⁴

Gerald Hanratty has written that "During his youth Hegel eagerly assimilated Masonic ideas and aspirations which were propagated in Germany by the supporters of the French revolution. Throughout his life he interested himself in the Masonic movement so that its ideas and aspirations were important elements of the matrix from which Hegel's Gnostic system emerged."¹⁷⁵ John Burbidge

171. Rosenkranz, 43.

172. Harris, Toward the Sunlight, 156. See also D'Hondt, Hegel Secret, 241.

173. Hegel refers to Minerva in a letter to Schelling written on Christmas Eve, 1794, while Hegel was in Berne. Butler, 28; Hoffmeister #6.

174. D'Hondt, 23-24.

175. Hanratty, 312-313.

writes that "Whenever the young tutor arrived in a strange town he soon established contact with people known to be active in the most progressive strands of the Masonic order."¹⁷⁶ We have no record of Hegel's having ever become a Mason. Although he appears to have been associated exclusively with the "progressive strands" of the order (i.e., the Enlightenment, rationalist strands), he was clearly conversant with its Hermetic or mystical aspects as well, as his poem "Eleusis" illustrates.

In 1796, Hegel learned through Hölderlin in Frankfurt that a more attractive post with the wealthy Gogel family might be available for him there. Hegel welcomed the opportunity to be back with Hölderlin, and wrote "Eleusis" for him, in commemoration of their friendship. The poem reads, in part:

Sense is lost in contemplation, what I called mine
vanishes,

unto the Boundless I abandon myself.

I am within it, am all things, am it alone.

The now-returning thought is shocked, shaking before
the Infinite.

Stunned, it does not grasp this intuition's depth.

176. Burbidge is summarizing the work of Jacques D'Hondt, in the introduction to his translation of D'Hondt's Hegel en son temps (Hegel In His Time; Lewiston, NY: Broadview Press, 1988), vii.

Imagination brings the Eternal closer to sense,
marrying it to shape--

Welcome, you noble spirits, you sublime shadows, from
whose brows perfection shines.

Jacques D'Hondt has claimed that the poem is deliberately laden with Masonic imagery. The Gogels were well-known Masons, and Hegel was apparently hoping that Hölderlin would share "Eleusis" with them, and that it would help to cement their relationship.¹⁷⁷ His ploy appears to have worked, for in mid-January 1797 he arrived in Frankfurt as tutor to the two Gogel boys. In the poem Hegel refers at one point to "this bond no oath has sealed," which for Harris "suggests a brotherhood inspired by the ideals of Freemasonry but without formal organization."¹⁷⁸ Clark Butler suggests that the "bond" united Schelling, Hegel, and Hölderlin as well as Isaak von Sinclair, another, less famous, friend from the Tübingen Stift.¹⁷⁹ Interestingly, Sinclair was descended from a very old Scottish family considered to be the hereditary rulers of the Freemasons. Among other things, they were responsible for the construction, around 1460, of Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland,

177. D'Hondt, Hegel Secret, 227-281.

178. Harris, Toward the Sunlight, 114; Jacques D'Hondt's Hegel Secret is an investigation into the Masonic background to Hegel's thought, but like Harris he focusses almost exclusively on the political ideals of Masonry.

179. See Butler, Hegel Letters, 45.

which is decorated with Templar, Masonic, and Kabbalistic imagery.

5. Pantheism, Hölderlin and Schelling

Alan M. Olson notes that in Hegel's corpus there are more than 300 references to Kant, 200 to Fichte, 100 to Schelling, 100 to Jacobi, but no references at all to Hölderlin.¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless, as Olson maintains, Hölderlin exercised a profound influence on Hegel. Hegel and Hölderlin appear to have been very close, and one reason for Hegel's silence about his friend may be that Hölderlin's descent into madness--he was committed to an asylum in Tübingen in 1806--affected him deeply.

Hegel and Hölderlin shared the conviction, felt more than consciously thought, that their own internal conflicts were the conflicts of the age, and were being played out on the stage of history. The chiliastic excesses of Württemberg pietists, the subject of much discussion at the Stift, combined with the drama of the French revolution to create the sense in Hegel and his schoolmates that history was moving toward some ultimate, final act.¹⁸¹ Olson writes that "Both were convinced that the future of Germany, especially its political unification, depended upon the generation of a common spiritual bond among its

180. Olson, 84.

181. Hayden-Roy, 216

people--a Volksreligion wholly independent of the alien, imported orientalism of Christianity."¹⁸²

Holderlin's Tübingen poetry (1788-1793) contains few references or allusions to Christian doctrine. Instead, a kind of "pantheistic paganism" prevails. He speaks of the "spark" of the "god within us."¹⁸³ It is often thought that Hölderlin adopted the Greek phrase hen kai pan (one and all) to express his metaphysical outlook while at the Stift. As H.S. Harris argues, however, hen kai pan should really be seen as the collective motto of Hölderlin, Schelling, and Hegel, though Hölderlin may have been the one who brought it to the group's attention.¹⁸⁴ The phrase hen kai pan itself is most likely taken from Jacobi's Briefe Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an der Herrn Moses Mendelssohn (1785), in which Jacobi records Lessing as having said "The orthodox concepts of the deity are no longer for me. Hen kai pan, I know no other." (The context of the comment is a conversation between Jacobi and Lessing about Goethe's poem Prometheus.) Jacobi printed Bruno's abstract of his work On the Cause, the Principles, and the One as an appendix to his book.

Jacobi's Über die Lehre des Spinoza, was, of course, principally responsible for bringing about the Spinoza revival of the late eighteenth century. H.S. Harris, in

182. Olson, 58.

183. Hayden-Roy, 208.

184. Harris, Toward the Sunlight, 101-105.

his intellectual biography of Hegel, refers to the "romantic Spinozism" of Hegel's day.¹⁸⁵ Jacobi's book exercised a profound influence on many thinkers, including Schelling and Hegel. It was not, however, Jacobi's intention to generate a revival of Spinoza's works. By revealing Lessing's Spinozism, Jacobi hoped to discredit one of the heroes of the Aufklärung.¹⁸⁶ To Jacobi, Spinoza's philosophy represented rationalism and determinism in their most extreme and virulent form. (Interestingly, Jacobi also claimed that Spinozism was a form of Kabbalism.)

Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743-1819) was a follower of Johann Georg Hamann (born 1730 in Königsberg, died 1788). Almost forgotten today, Hamann, a Kabbalist and Böhmean who held the familiar thesis of "nature as emblem-book," was extraordinarily influential in his time. Hamann's "Metakritik" essay (published in 1800) stated, in the words of Frederick Beiser, "one of the central goals of all post-Kantian philosophy: the search for the inner unity, the common source of Kant's dualism."¹⁸⁷ Beiser writes that "Herder, Schlegel, and Hegel all accepted Hamann's advice to see reason in its embodiment, in its

185. Ibid., 295.

186. Some doubted the authenticity of Jacobi's claims about Lessing. But, as Frederick Beiser notes that Lessing's Nathan the Wise "is indeed little more than a dramatic presentation of the philosophical doctrine of Spinoza's Tractatus" (Beiser, 56).

187. Ibid., 43.

specific social and historical context."¹⁸⁸ Goethe and Schelling admired Hamann greatly.¹⁸⁹ The already-famous Jacobi met Hamann and, converted to his anti-Enlightenment philosophy, became his most vociferous advocate.¹⁹⁰ It was Jacobi who transmitted Hamann's thought to the Romantics, and to those, like Schelling, engaged in Naturphilosophie. (Hegel appears not to have been very directly influenced by Hamann, but in 1828 he published a critical review of Hamann's collected works.¹⁹¹)

The significance of the Pantheismusstreit of the late eighteenth century cannot be overstated. Thanks to Jacobi's revelations, pantheism became, as Heinrich Heine would put it in the next century, "the unofficial religion of Germany."¹⁹² Rheinhold's extremely influential popularization of Kant--Briefe über die kantische Philosophie (1786)--aimed at making Kant relevant to the pantheism controversy. Such luminaries as Goethe, Novalis, Herder, Schlegel, and Schleiermacher all dallied with pantheism. There was little difficulty in being both Lutheran and pantheist: as Frederick Beiser points out, Lutherans believed in an immediate relationship to God, and

188. Ibid., 18.

189. Isaiah Berlin, The Magus of the North: J.G. Hamann and the Origins of Modern Irrationalism (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993), 2-3.

190. Ibid., 17.

191. Hegel, "Hamanns Schriften" in Werke, Vol. 11, 275-352.

192. Quoted in Beiser, 45.

pantheism, teaching that all things, including men, are God or are within God, certainly provided that.¹⁹³

Hölderlin, in his own journal, copied out the "hen kai pan" passage from Jacobi's book.¹⁹⁴ In a letter to his mother from February 1791 Hölderlin mentions that he has immersed himself in works by and about Spinoza. According to Karl Rosenkranz, Hegel's biographer, Hegel, Schelling and others at the Stift all read Jacobi's book. Schelling in particular embraced Spinoza. In a February 4, 1795 letter to Hegel, Schelling writes "For us [as with Lessing] the orthodox concepts of God are no more . . . I have in the interim become a Spinozist! Do not be astonished. You will soon hear how. For Spinoza the world, the object by itself in opposition to the subject, was everything. For me it is the self."¹⁹⁵

Hölderlin wrote his only novel, Hyperion, in the years 1792-1799. Priscilla A. Hayden-Roy, in her study of the influence of Württemberg pietism on the poet, claims that the thematic content of Hyperion was influenced by Oetinger's doctrine of Sensus Communis.¹⁹⁶ Hayden-Roy is not alone in this thesis. As she notes, Ulrich Gaier and Walter Dierauer have also argued that Hölderlin's poetic theory is based on Württemberg speculative pietism.¹⁹⁷

193. Ibid., 52.

194. Harris, Toward the Sunlight, 99.

195. Quoted in Butler, Hegel Letters, 32.

196. Hayden-Roy, 227.

197. Ulrich Gaier, Der gesetzliche Kalkül: Hölderlin's Dichtungslehre (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1962); Walter

Hölderlin may have been indirectly acquainted with P.M. Hahn's work through a poet, C.F.D. Schubart. Hölderlin met Schubart, a follower of Hahn, in the spring of 1789.¹⁹⁸

Although Hegel was happy to be reunited with Hölderlin in Frankfurt (he had apparently succumbed to depression while in Berne), he was forced to witness Hölderlin's deteriorating mental state. In November 1800, after receiving a small inheritance upon the death of his father, Hegel wrote to Schelling in Jena, appealing for his assistance in relocating there. The two men had not corresponded in five years, and in that time Schelling had become a celebrity, receiving his post at Jena with the backing of Goethe. I shall not enter here into the familiar details of Schelling and Hegel's turbulent friendship. Suffice it to say that Hegel came to Jena in early 1801, sharing quarters with Schelling. After some months, he produced his first philosophical work for publication, Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's Systems of Philosophy (1801).

What seems to have attracted Hegel to Schelling's early system is Schelling's claim that at the root of all that is real is an infinite life (recall Oetinger's

Dierauer, Hölderlin und der Spekulative Pietismus Württembergs: Gemeinsame Anschauungshorizonte im Werk Oetingers und Hölderlins (Zürich: Juris, 1986). Gaier claims that Hölderlin's theory of the "modulation of tones" (Wechsel der Töne) is based upon a sevenfold distinction in Oetinger's Kabbalism.
198. Hayden Roy, 185.

Theologia ex idea vitae deducta). In Schelling's early "System of Identity," "philosophy of nature" is understood as the story of how Reason, the Absolute Ego, unconsciously produces a tangible world which reaches its consummation with the coming into being of man, who can embody self-conscious Reason or Ego. This is held to be parallel to "transcendental idealism," Reason's actual self-understanding, because in both it is Reason or Ego that is the underlying principle and "result." Thus, the subject-object distinction is transcended: nature, the external world or object, really is Ego expressing or developing itself. This infinite Ego lying behind the subject-object distinction, moving or generating the whole process, was conceived by Schelling as an infinite and primordial life.

Schelling maintained much the same doctrine in the later Freiheitschrift (Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom; 1809): "Gott ein Leben ist," he writes, "nicht bloss ein Sein" ("God is a life, not merely a being").¹⁹⁹ The influence of Böhme on the Freiheitschrift--in which Schelling employs the term theosophy--has been remarked on by many,²⁰⁰ but Robert Schneider argues that the more direct influence is that of

199. Sämtliche Werke, Vol. 7, 403.

200. See Edward Allen Beach, The Potencies of Gods: Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); Robert F. Brown, The Later Philosophy of Schelling: The Influence of Boehme on the Works 1809-1815 (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977).

Oetinger. According to Schneider, Schelling's use of such terms as Licht, Finsternis, Abgrund, Band der Kräfte, auflöslich, unauflöslich, bestandhaltend, lebendige Bewegungskräfte shows the impress of Oetinger's thought.²⁰¹ Ernst Benz writes that Schelling's "principal ideas are dependent upon the terminology of Bengel and Oetinger in such a direct and visible way that it is impossible to ignore these fundamental sources of his thought."²⁰²

Schelling's connections to Swabian speculative pietism are much better documented than are Hegel's. We know, for instance, that Schelling's father owned Oetinger's works.²⁰³ Schelling's father and grandfather were both followers of Bengel. Schelling's great uncle Friedrich Philipp von Rieger was a supporter of Oetinger and J. M. Hahn, who expressed his gratitude to Rieger in his autobiography. When Schelling was ten or eleven years old,

201. R. Schneider, 10. Gershom Scholem (Kabbalah, 200) finds the influence of Oetinger "discernible" in the works of both Schelling and Hegel. Klaus Vondung notes that "Hermeticism was brought to Schelling's attention by Oetinger, who was an expert in all sorts of esoteric knowledge, although this connection has not yet been investigated satisfactorily." He regards Oetinger as having conveyed to Schelling and Hegel the pansophic ideal of a universal "super science" (Vondung, 132; 126).

202. Benz, Mystical Sources, 30.

203. R. Schneider, 8. In a September 7, 1806 letter to his father, Schelling states that Franz von Baader asked him if he could obtain for him the writings of Oetinger. Schelling passed the letter along to his friend Pregizer. Pregizer, an Oetingerite, was the founder of "the Joyous Christians," a pietist sect. According to Pregizer, when he first met Schelling in 1803 in they spent almost the entire time talking about Böhme and Oetinger. See Benz, Mystical Sources, 13-14.

he lived in Nürtingen with his uncle Köstlin, a deacon. Diakon Köstlin was known to have close ties to the Bengel-Oettinger circle and may have proselytized his nephew.²⁰⁴ P.M. Hahn's diary reveals that Schelling's father, who taught at the monastery school in Bebenhausen, called on Hahn, with his wife and young Friedrich in tow, on October 6, 1784.²⁰⁵ Schelling's first published work was a poem which he wrote on the occasion of the death of Hahn.²⁰⁶ Schelling later wrote of Hahn in a letter: "As a little boy, I beheld this great man with hidden, uncomprehending awe; and strangely enough, the first of the few poems I have written in my life was upon his death. I will never forget his countenance."²⁰⁷

Oettinger attempted to prove his thesis about the reality of "spirit body" through an actual experiment. He claimed that if crushed balm-mint leaves are boiled their juice will form the pattern of the original leaves on the surface of the water. This was supposed to prove the existence of spirit as something separate from the material body, which it informs. Oettinger used the word essentification to describe the unfolding of the

204. All of these details about Schelling's family are to be found in R. Schneider, 7-8.

205. Hayden-Roy, 54.

206. See F.W.J. Schelling, Historisch-kritische Ausgabe im Auftrag der Schelling-Kommission der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, ed. H.M. Baumgartner et al., Serie I, Werke (Stuttgart: Fromann-Holzboog, 1976-), Vol. 1, 33-45.

207. Schelling, Sämtliche Werke, Vol. 1, 34 (letter to Heinrich von Schubert April 4, 1811).

potentialities of a thing as made possible by its spirit. He frequently likened the process to the alchemical opus.²⁰⁸ Not only did Schelling appropriate the term essentification from Oetinger, but even the balm-leaf experiment.

In a lecture, Schelling contrasted two different ideas about death: one which holds that in death soul and body are sundered, and another (Schelling's own) which holds that death is simply an advance to a higher form of existence, in which both soul and body are retained, and perfected. Schelling writes:

This other idea [compares] the effect of death with the process by which the spirit or the essence of a plant is extracted. Thus one imagines that all the power and all the life of a plant pass into the oil extracted from it Some followers of the doctrine of general regeneration even affirm that the drops of oil-of-balm form the shape of the balm leaves again. I have not seen this personally, it is true, and I will not make a pronouncement on this subject, although the similar phenomena that can be observed in etheric liquid oils reveal a strange life within, and prove that it is not a matter of annihilated life but of spiritualized life. Thus, the death of man would

208. See R. Schneider, 123.

not be a separation but rather an
 "essentification."²⁰⁹

(In fact, others were not able to replicate Oetinger's experiment.²¹⁰) This is proof positive that Schelling was intimately acquainted with Oetinger's theories.

Schelling betrays his connections with Württemberg pietism even in the titles of his works. In 1811 he wrote a work entitled Die Weltalter, which was also the title of a very well-known book by J.A. Bengel (published in 1746). In Schelling's Die Weltalter, the influence of Oetinger is quite apparent. He writes at one point: "The ultimate purpose is that everything, as much as possible, be brought to visible, material form; embodiment [Leiblichkeit] is, as the ancients [Alten] expressed it, the endpoint of the way of God (finis viarum Dei), who wants to reveal Himself as spatial or as temporal."²¹¹

No sooner had Schelling embraced the Kantian-Fichtean philosophy than he insisted on its supplementation by Naturphilosophie, which precipitated his break with Fichte. Robert Schneider argues that Schelling was predisposed to value Naturphilosophie due to his early immersion in the thought of Oetinger and his circle. In any case,

209. Schelling, Sämtliche Werke, Vol. 14, 207. Quoted in Benz, Mystical Sources, 53. See Benz's account of this issue, and of other evidence for Oetinger's influence on Schelling, pages 51-55.

210. Walsh, Boehme and Hegel, 91.

211. Schelling, Sämtliche Werke, Vol. 8, 325.

Schelling's grand synthesis was obviously extremely appealing to Hegel because it enabled him to reconcile the Hermetic, mystical philosophy to which he, like Schelling, had been exposed in early life, with the "mainstream" philosophy and theology with which he now, as a university professor, had to publicly align himself. (As H.S. Harris notes, Hölderlin's philosophical fragments show that he was developing something like an "Identity philosophy" as far back as 1795, indicating the same dynamic at work in his own Swabian soul.²¹²)

Schelling's advocacy of the thesis that there is an identity between matter and consciousness was too much for Fichte, though not for Goethe, who was a strong supporter. Like Hölderlin, Schelling was, as I have already noted, strongly influenced by Spinoza. In his "Exposition of My System of Philosophy" (1801) Schelling made the explicit claim that the Absolute Ego of Fichte was identical with Spinoza's "God of Nature." Schelling went on to liken the two parallel parts of his system, transcendental idealism and philosophy of nature, to expositions of Spinoza's twin attributes of thought and extension. He even referred to Naturphilosophie as the "Spinozism of physics."²¹³

212. H.S. Harris, "Introduction to the Difference Essay," in G.W.F. Hegel, The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy, trans. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 3.

213. F.W.J. Schelling "Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie" (1799), in Werke, Vol. 2 (Munich: Beck, 1927), 273.

Like Böhme, with whom he was acquainted early on, Schelling held that the finite or nature is a mirror (speculum) held up to the infinite.²¹⁴ Hence, speculative philosophy.²¹⁵ The speculative activity of the philosopher, which attempts to understand creation in its telos and in all its aspects, is in effect the completion or consummation of the Infinite's self-reflection. Using language that would certainly have reminded many of his readers of Oetinger, Hegel in the Differenzschrift refers to the Ego, the "identity point" of philosophy, as the "point of contraction."²¹⁶ The Ego is the "indifference point." In the system of the subject (transcendental idealism), the Ego is "contracted" into its primordial self-relation. In the system of the object, or nature, Ego "expands" outward as a real but "frozen" expression of itself to itself.²¹⁷ (One is inevitably reminded, as many have pointed out, of the doctrine of the "coincidence of opposites" in Eckhart and Cusa and other mystics.) Schelling even went so far as to interpret laws of nature as laws of Spirit in "unconscious form." His "Identity philosophy" held out the hope of an experience of the

214. Kurt Leeser's dissertation Von Jakob Böhme zu Schelling (Erfurt, 1927) deals with the Böhmean influence on Schelling's work.

215. Harris, "Introduction to Difference," 41.

216. G.W.F. Hegel, The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy, 165-167; Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 4, ed. Hartmut Buchner and Otto Pöggler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), 72-73.

217. F.W.J. Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie (1799), in Werke, Vol. 2, 268.

ultimate unity of subject and object, and finite and infinite, in aesthetic consciousness.

H.S. Harris writes of the similarities between Schelling's system of Identity and Böhme's theosophy: "In Böhme's theosophy 'desire' is the Abgrund of the 'dark centre' into which self-consciousness 'contracts.' The full realization of the image of God requires that it should 'expand' again into the 'light centre.' The moment of absolute contraction where the transition occurs is a 'flash' (Schrack). Thus all the terminology of 'Schelling's System'. . . bears the clear impress of Böhme's vision."²¹⁸ Like Paracelsus (as I will discuss in Chapter Six), Schelling held that medicine was the highest of all the natural sciences.²¹⁹ (Recall also the emphasis Andreae placed upon medicine in the Rosicrucian manifestoes.) Antoine Faivre writes of Schelling's system, "The relationship to alchemy is obvious, so much so that Schelling's Naturphilosophie appeared from the beginning as an attempt to bring together the traditional givens of pansophy and the spirit of Kantian philosophy."²²⁰ As

218. Harris, Night Thoughts, 165. Other authors have concentrated almost exclusively on Böhme's influence on Schelling's later period. See Edward Allen Beach, The Potencies of Gods: Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology and Robert F. Brown, The Later Philosophy of Schelling: The Influence of Boehme on the Works 1809-1815.

219. F.W.J. Schelling, "Vorrede zu den Jahrbüchern der Medicin als Wissenschaft," in Werke, Vol. 4, 65.

220. Faivre, Access to Western Esotericism, 83.

Robert Brown has shown, in later years Schelling immersed himself even more deeply in Böhme.²²¹

In 1802, Schelling published a dialogue, Bruno, in which he put his philosophy into the mouth of a character loosely patterned after Giordano Bruno. After reading an advance copy of the dialogue, Goethe wrote to Schiller on March 16, 1802, "Schelling has written a dialogue, Bruno or On the Divine and Natural Principles of Things. What I understand of it--or believe I understand--is excellent and agrees with my deepest convictions. But I am doubtful whether it will be possible for others to follow it through all its sections and understand it as a whole."²²²

Goethe could not have known at the time that Schelling was soon to be eclipsed by a thinker even more in agreement with his "deepest convictions," especially where those convictions could be called Hermetic. On April 24, 1825, Hegel wrote to Goethe, "when I look back over the course of my intellectual development, I see you everywhere woven into it, and may call myself one of your sons: what is inward in me has been nourished by you toward resilient

221. Schelling also became interested in the visionary mysticism of Emanuel Swedenborg, particularly after the untimely death of his wife Karoline in 1811. See Benz, Mystical Sources, 15-16, as well as Friedemann Horn, Schelling and Swedenborg: Mysticism and German Idealism, trans. George F. Dole (West Chester, PA: The Swedenborg Foundation, 1997).

222. See Xavier Tilliette, Schelling im Spiegel seiner Zeitgenossen, (Turin: Bottega, d'Erasmus, 1974), 91.

strength in the face of abstraction, and has oriented its course by your forms as by beacons."²²³

223. Butler, 708; Hoffmeister #489.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE MYTHOLOGY OF REASON

1. The Absolute Religion

In the beginning, Hegel thought that a new religion was needed to unite philosophers and ordinary people; to transcend the Platonic dichotomy between the "wise" and the "vulgar." In their time together in Jena, however, Schelling persuaded Hegel that it is not the philosopher's task to create such a religion. Nevertheless, Hegel continued to insist that the new philosophy could have an effect on religion, making it truer to its own essence. Hegel's view, which remained unchanged throughout his career, was that a completed philosophy would take on a form which would make it accessible in varying degrees to everyone. That form would be a "mythology of reason." It is the task of much of this chapter to explain what Hegel meant by this enigmatic phrase, which appears in a fragment, perhaps from June or July of 1796, referred to by scholars as "eine Ethik" (its first words) and under the title "The Earliest System-Program of German Idealism."

For many years, the authorship of the "System-Program" was in doubt. It was variously attributed to Hegel, Schelling, and Hölderlin. I do not intend to rehearse the various arguments for and against Hegel's authorship here. Most Hegel scholars, however, accept Otto Pöggler's arguments for attributing authorship to Hegel and I shall

follow their lead.¹ Pöggler dates the fragment to Hegel's Berne period, in late 1796 or early 1797.²

The "System-Program" reflects an ambivalence on Hegel's part about the goal of philosophy. It seems as if Hegel still clings to the idea of a new religion, yet philosophy is also depicted as an absolute science. In truth, we can see in the "System-Program" Hegel's first attempt to reconcile philosophy and religion. Philosophy can be popular and even religious without becoming religion or giving primacy to religion if its content happens to be the thought forms which underlie all religion and folk consciousness.

Thus, philosophy for Hegel will have as its task the recovery and perfection of these pre-reflective thought forms granted to mankind from time immemorial, a wisdom that has expressed itself partially and imperfectly in all previous religion, myth, philosophy, mysticism, art, and poetry. Genuine philosophy is uncreative.³ Instead, it is

1. Otto Pöggler, "Hegel der Verfasser des Ältesten Systemprogramms des deutschen Idealismus," Hegel-Studien, Beiheft 4 (1969): 17-32.

2. Gisela Schüller has argued that the "System-Program" was Hegel's last Berne essay in her "Zur Chronologie von Hegels Jugendschriften," Hegel-Studien 2 (1963): 111-159.

3. For Hegel's views on mythology and what I shall call "mytho-poetic thought" see the Lectures on the History of Philosophy, vol. 1, 81-91 (Werke 18, 102-113). Hegel was also greatly influenced by the writings of Georg Friedrich Creuzer (1771-1858), a philologist and historian of religion and mythology whom he knew in Heidelberg (Creuzer is mentioned in the passages cited above). Clark Butler writes that "[Hegel] borrowed from Creuzer the idea of a primitive Oriental monism running symbolically through all true religion, expressed in Indian mysticism, preserved in

an expression of a wisdom that is already there--in the consciousness of a people, latent in its myth, religion, art, and philosophical thought. But this wisdom becomes only partially "conscious" through these means. Therefore we can say that this wisdom belongs not to the consciousness of a people, but to its unconscious.⁴ In the Encyclopedia Logic Hegel states that "The business of philosophy consists only in bringing into consciousness explicitly what people have held to be valid about thought from time immemorial. Thus, philosophy establishes nothing new; what we have brought forth by our reflection here is what everyone already takes for granted without reflection" (EL § 22, Z; Geraets, 55).⁵

the Greek mysteries, lying behind classical Greek polytheism . . . implicit in classical theism, and coming to self-conscious expression in Hegel's concept of the Absolute as the infinite Incarnation" (See Butler, Hegel: The Letters, 368). Consider also this passage from a Zusatz to the Encyclopedia Logic: "Philosophy should not shy away from religion, and adopt the attitude that it must be content if religion simply tolerates it. And on the other hand, we must equally reject the view that myths and religious accounts of this kind are something obsolete, for they have been venerated for millenia by the peoples of the world" (EL § 24 Z3; Geraets, 61).

4. Frances Yates describes Giordano Bruno's thought in strikingly similar terms: "it was Bruno's mission to paint and mould within, to teach that the artist, the poet, and the philosopher are all one, for the Mother of the Muses is Memory. Nothing comes out but what has first been formed within, and it is therefore within that the significant work is done." Frances Yates, The Art of Memory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 305.

5. In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Hegel states that "all persons have . . . a consciousness of God, or of the absolute substance, as the truth of everything and so also of themselves, of everything that they are and do" (LPR I, 85; VPR I, 4).

In a Zusatz to the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel remarks that "We usually suppose that the Absolute must lie far beyond; but it is precisely what is wholly present, what we, as thinkers, always carry with us and employ, even though we have no express consciousness of it" (EL § 24 Z: Geraets, 59).⁶ In the Science of Logic, Hegel states that "The activity of thought which is at work in all our ideas, purposes, interests and actions is . . . unconsciously busy [bewusstlos geschäftig] (natural logic [die natürliche Logik])." Its basis is "the soul itself" (Miller, 36-37; WL I, 15-16). In his speculation, Hegel is descending into the depths of the European, and specifically Germanic unconscious. Sean Kelly writes that "Hegel's concept of the soul is a clear anticipation of Jung's concept of the collective unconscious."⁷

The following surreal, cthonic, almost unintelligible passage from Hegel's Realphilosophie manuscript of 1805/06 reflects his deep immersion in the realm of the unconscious:

6. Elsewhere, Hegel states: "Being, Not-Being, One, Many, Quality, Size and so on are pure essences . . . with which we keep house all the time in ordinary life." See "Report of Rosenkranz About Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit in the Early Jena Period," in G.W.F. Hegel, System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit, trans. H.S. Harris and T.M. Knox (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), 258. Karl Rosenkranz, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), 183.
 7. Sean Kelly, Individuation and the Absolute: Hegel, Jung and the Path Toward Wholeness (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 16.

The human being is this night, this empty nothing, that contains everything in its simplicity--an unending wealth of many presentations, images, of which none happens to occur to him--or which are not present. This night, the inner of nature, that exists here--pure self--in phantasmagorical presentations, is night all around it, here shoots a bloody head--there another white shape, suddenly here before it, and just so disappears. One catches sight of this night when one looks human beings in the eye--into a night that becomes awful, it suspends the night of the world here in an opposition. In this night being has returned. . .⁸

Hegel holds the traditional, Hermetic conception of philosophia perennis: all previous systems of thought--religious, mythological, philosophical--aim at and partially unveil the same doctrine.⁹ Speculative

8. Quoted in (and translated by) Donald Phillip Verene, Hegel's Recollection: A Study of Images in the Phenomenology of Spirit (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 7-8.

9. See H.S. Harris's Introduction to his and T.M. Knox's translation of Hegel's System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), 63-64: "Philosophy is participation in an eternal vision. It is always one and the same, and if one achieves it, the occasion or path by which one does so becomes irrelevant, indifferent. Speculation is the end in and for itself." See also Harris's Introduction to his and Walter Cerf's translation of Hegel's Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 18: "By reasserting the presence of a philosophia perennis, Hegel

philosophy is the final, fully adequate and fully conscious form of the philosophia perennis, which could only be accomplished in modern times. In a fragment preserved by Rosenkranz, Hegel writes "From the true cognition of [the principle of all philosophy], there will arise the conviction that there has been only one and the same philosophy at all times. So not only am I promising nothing new here, but rather am I devoting my philosophical efforts precisely to the restoration of the oldest of old things, and on freeing it from the misunderstanding in which the recent times of unphilosophy have buried it."¹⁰ This perennial character of speculation is made quite clear in one of the Zusätze to the Encyclopedia Logic, where Hegel states that "It should . . . be mentioned here that the meaning of the speculative is to be understood as being

aimed to show that the dialectic of philosophical ideas is subordinate to, and instrumental for, the focal concern of rational speculation, which never varies." Hegel writes in the Difference essay: "if the Absolute, like Reason which is its appearance, is eternally one and the same--as indeed it is--then every Reason that is directed toward itself and comes to recognize itself, produces a true philosophy and solves for itself the problem which, like its solution, is at all times the same" (trans., Harris and Cerf, 87). German edition: Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 4 (henceforth, Differenz), ed. Hartmut Buchner and Otto Pöggler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), 11. Hegel is speaking here as an exponent of Schelling's Identity philosophy (and Harris is expounding the views of Hegel the Schellingian), but I am maintaining that on these basic meta-philosophical issues, his position did not change.

10. Rosenkranz, Hegel's Leben, 192.

the same as what used in earlier times to be called the 'mystical'. . . " (EL § 82, Z; Geraets, 133)¹¹

Speculation thus depends on recollection, the recollection of the philosophia perennis. In another fragment, possibly from the same period as the "System-Program," known as "On Mythology, the Spirit of the People, and Art", Hegel speaks of Mnemosyne (Memory) as the "absolute Muse." He writes: "The work of art of mythology propagates itself in living tradition. As peoples grow in the liberation of their consciousness, so the mythological work of art continuously grows and clarifies and matures. This work of art is a general possession, the work of everyone. Each generation hands it down embellished to the one that follows; each works further toward the liberation of absolute consciousness."¹² Mnemosyne, Memory or Recollection, is the mother of the muse of the poet, the artist, and the philosopher. She is their access to primordial wisdom, knowledge of the whole. All three may hear her voice and express her wisdom in their own ways. Through her voice the philosopher can learn to speak the truly complete and adequate speech, which is speculation, the speech of the Absolute.

11. Hegel repeats this observation in his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion of 1824 (LPR III, 192; VPR III, 125).

12. Translation by Donald Phillip Verene in his Hegel's Recollection, 36; my emphasis.

The result of Hegel's project will be, he hoped, a return in a sense to a more "natural" consciousness, like that possessed by the Greeks, but in a form that is fully modern and self-aware (to say nothing of being Protestant and Lutheran). Just as in Jakob Böhme, man's fall is necessary because his original unity with God and with his own true nature is an unthinking unity. We must be brought back to unity, but this time the unity must be achieved in full self-consciousness. Philosophy will constitute, in effect, a perfected form of living in the world which will transform religious life, art, our understanding of history, of science, of government--of all aspects of man and his world. As H.S. Harris puts it, "Philosophy is not just a nocturnal study of shadows and reflections; it is the perfected consciousness of human living, or an actual experience of living in the light of the eternal day."¹³

Hegel conceives the life of the philosopher as the "highest" form of existence. But the "life" with which his philosophy is concerned, the new manner of living which it will make possible, will unite all peoples, the masses and the intellectuals. In the "System-Program" Hegel writes, "in the end enlightened and unenlightened must clasp hands, mythology must become philosophical in order to make the people rational, and philosophy must become mythological in order to make the philosophers sensible. Then reigns

13. H.S. Harris, Hegel's Development Vol. II: Night Thoughts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 199.

eternal unity among us. No more the look of scorn [of the enlightened philosopher looking down on the mob], no more the blind trembling of the people before its wise men and priests."¹⁴

Philosophy can become accessible to all, it can provide us with a new way of life which revivifies religion and all areas of human existence, it can illuminate the cave with sunlight, if the "mythology of reason" is developed. Hegel writes in the same fragment, "Here I shall discuss particularly an idea which, as far as I know, has never occurred to anyone else--we must have a new mythology, but this mythology must be in the service of the Ideas, it must be a mythology of reason."¹⁵ But what does this mean? How can speculation be a mythology, if its task is to recover the perennial thought forms underlying all mythology, religion, poetry, etc.? Doesn't speculation go deeper than myth? The phrase "mythology of reason" never occurs again in any of Hegel's other writings or lectures,

14. I am using H.S. Harris's translation of the "System-Program" in his Hegel's Development Vol. I: Toward the Sunlight (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972), 510-512; 511-512, Harris's interpolations. For a German edition see "Das Älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus" in Werke 1 (henceforth, Systemprogramm), 234-36.

15. Hegel, System-Program, 511; Systemprogramm, 236. Friedrich Schlegel claimed that the creation of a "rational mythology" was the literary aim of the Romantic movement. Though Hegel was not exactly sympathetic with Romanticism, he may have been influenced by this idea. See F. Schlegel, Prosaische Jugendschriften, 2 vols., ed. J. Minor (Vienna, 1906), Vol. 2, 357-366. For similar ideas see Schelling, System of Transcendental Idealism, trans. Peter Heath (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1980), 223.

but I think that it provides a key to understanding Hegel's entire approach to philosophy. To approach an understanding of this unique conception, something further must be said about the relation of philosophy to recollection.

2. Speculation and Recollection

Accounts of Hegel's view of the history of philosophy tend to overemphasize his claim that all previous philosophy approaches what he ultimately accomplishes in speculative philosophy. What tends not to be emphasized is the necessary presupposition of this account: that thinking man in some sense knew where he was going from the beginning, that the history of philosophy is not the story of the gradual creation of different systems of philosophy, but rather the story of the gradual recollection of the one true "system," of wisdom itself.

If this is the case, one might ask: Why does Hegel insist on the historicity of his final and adequate recollection of the truth, i.e., why does he insist that this could only have occurred "after history"? When we finally reach the stage at which we make the Absolute our own, when we know that the Absolute, which is God, is the consummation of a universal human consciousness, we fully grasp the "Idea" of philosophy and all philosophical thought reaches closure. Hegel believed that this

intellectual achievement could only have been accomplished after history itself was consummated, i.e., after human beings have recognized themselves as free and not determined by an Absolute which stands opposed to humanity as an absolute other. The final form of wisdom is necessarily a self-conscious form: the Absolute Idea achieves full realization or disclosure through humanity's explicit recognition of itself as the agent of the Ideas's consummation. Hegelian speculation is not just another expression of the perennial philosophy, but an expression which understands itself as an expression of the perennial philosophy. Thus, Hegelian speculation is the in itself of human consciousness finally made for itself, made explicit.

If speculation involves recollection, it appears to be a fundamentally passive activity. This is indeed the case, for the term "speculation," as is often pointed out, comes from speculum, or "mirror." What does the speculative philosopher "mirror"? Speculation holds up a mirror to the Idea itself: it allows Idea to comprehend itself. Hegel's concept of speculation harks back to Pythagoras's comparison of the philosophers to spectators at the Olympic games. The philosopher is a vehicle of the muses: an oracle through which Spirit expresses itself, an automatic writer who passively watches the play of the dialectic as it develops on his page.¹⁶

16. One is reminded of Jacobi's dictum that it is the task of the philosopher to "disclose existence." See Frederick

This talk of "recollection" and of the "perennial philosophy" does not, however, imply that Hegel's project is to recover a wisdom that was already possessed long ago, and which has since been lost. Hegel holds neither a Platonic doctrine of recollection, nor a Böhmean doctrine of lost Adamic wisdom. In fact, in the Berlin lectures on the Philosophy of Nature (1819-1830) Hegel criticizes Romantic and Schellingian Naturphilosophie, which imply that:

although people nowadays no longer find themselves in a state of paradise, there are still favored ones [Sonntagskinder] to whom God imparts the verities of cognition and science while they sleep, and that even if a man is not so favored, he can transport himself thither merely by . . . giving rein to his imagination, [and thereby] give prophetic utterance to truth. Such a performance . . . has been generally regarded as the consummation of scientific ability. What is more, it is also asserted that such a state of consummate science preceded the present history of the world, and that since our fall from this unity some remnants and distant glimmerings of that spiritual light have remained with us in myths, tradition, and other fragments, on to which the further education of

C. Beiser, The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 67.

the human race in religion has fastened, and from which all scientific cognition has proceeded. If it were no more difficult than this for consciousness to know truth, but one only had to sit on a tripod and utter oracles, the labour of thought would certainly be spared [PN § 246, Z; Petry I, 199].¹⁷

What Hegel rejects here, first of all, is the idea that Absolute Science or Wisdom was ever, at some earlier time, wholly and self-consciously possessed by man.¹⁸ (This is the conception of "Adamic wisdom.") Second, even if man actually had possessed such wisdom, Hegel rejects the idea that it could be recovered through the use of "imagination" or "creativity" in the Romantics' sense. But this does not imply that Hegel rejects the idea of an unconscious wisdom. Indeed, Hegel sees the "perennial philosophy" as a "movement" of thought toward the full, conscious expression of an unconscious wisdom never adequately expressed, until Hegel came along.

But why should we believe in the existence of this "unconscious wisdom" in the first place? Because all philosophy is implicitly or explicitly dialectical in nature, and the activity of dialectic presupposes that one always already possesses wisdom, although in an implicit

17. For a similar passage, see the Philosophy of Spirit (PS § 405, Z; Petry II, 231).

18. I shall adopt the convention of referring to Hegel's system as "Science."

form, and that dialectic is a recollection and explication of such wisdom. This is true of both Hegelian and Platonic dialectic. The pattern of Platonic dialectic is this: attempts are made to define some universal, all of which prove inadequate, but each of which "builds on" the previous attempt. For instance, in the Republic, Cephalus's definition of Justice as "returning what one has borrowed" (331b) is rejected with Socrates's counterexample of the crazed man who demands the return of a weapon. The participants immediately see that this could not be just, that Cephalus's attempt to define Justice is a failure. But they could not make such a judgement--rejecting Cephalus's definition as wrong simply on the basis of Socrates's counterexample--unless they already had some pre-reflective access to the Idea of Justice. The key to the dialectic, then, is that the participants already know, in some sense, the meaning of the terms they aim at defining.

In the same manner, each category of Hegel's Logic constitutes a "provisional definition of the Absolute," but each proves partial and inadequate, forcing us to inquire further, and so the dialectic pushes on. We do not rest content with Being, or with Being-for-self or with the Measureless or with Identity, because we experience a disparity between each category and what we somehow already know the Idea to be. In the Difference essay of 1801 Hegel

writes: "What the so-called common sense takes to be the rational consists similarly of single items drawn out of the Absolute into consciousness. They are points of light that arise out of the night of totality and aid men to get through life in an intelligent way. . . . In fact, however, men only have this confidence in the truth of these points of light because they have a feeling of the Absolute attending these points . . . "19

Hegel's muse is Mnemosyne because his dialectic is a recollection of what our finite individual spirit has somehow already glimpsed of Absolute Spirit. In the Difference essay, Hegel writes of the "presuppositions" [Voraussetzungen] of philosophy. One such presupposition, he says is "the Absolute itself. It is the goal that is being sought; but it is already present, or how otherwise could it be sought?"20 Jean Hyppolite writes: "In our opinion, if we are to understand Hegel's [dialectic] we must assume that the whole is always immanent in the development of consciousness. Negation is creative because the posited term had been isolated and thus was itself a

19. Hegel, Difference, 98-99 my emphasis; Differenz, 20.

20. Hegel, Difference, 93; Differenz, 16. This may seem to be simply a statement about the Schellingian Absolute, but my contention is that in Hegel's mature philosophy the Absolute is still, in a certain sense, a "goal" to be sought. This will become more clear in my treatment of the Phenomenology in the next chapter. Plato, of course, has his own doctrine of recollection, intended to explain exactly the phenomenon described above: how we seem to already know the result we aim at in dialectic, and why we feel at every step as if we are recollecting something we already knew.

kind of negation. From this it follows that the negation of that term allows the whole to be recaptured in each of its parts. Were it not for the immanence of the whole in consciousness, we should be unable to understand how negation can truly engender a content."²¹ And Hyppolite goes on to say: "We have evidence of the immanence of the whole in consciousness in the teleological nature of the latter's development: 'The goal of knowledge is fixed as necessarily as the series of progressions.'"²²

Dialectic is the "method" by which speculation aims to "recollect" unconscious wisdom and to complete the perennial philosophy. But how can Hegel know that he has brought the perennial philosophy to completion? This seems to involve a further methodological consideration not covered by an account of dialectic alone. In fact, it is precisely Hegel's understanding of speculation as a "Mythology of Reason"--precisely Hegel's understanding of speculation as in some sense an aesthetic act--which allows him to demonstrate the completeness of his recollection of the perennial philosophy.

21. Jean Hyppolite, The Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. S. Cherniak and J. Heckman (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 15; my italics.

22. Ibid., 15; For the quotation see Miller 51; PG, 62.

3. Speculation as "Mythic"

In the "System-Program" Hegel writes of his Mythology of Reason: "I am now convinced that the highest act of Reason, the one through which it encompasses all Ideas, is an aesthetic act, and that truth and goodness only become sisters in beauty--the philosopher must possess just as much aesthetic power as the poet. Men without aesthetic sense is what our literal-minded philosophers [unsere Buchstabenphilosophen] are. The philosophy of the spirit is an aesthetic philosophy."²³ During his Jena period, Hegel, like Schelling, claimed that art as well as philosophy gives us access to the Absolute. In the Difference essay, Hegel (ostensibly speaking for Schelling) writes: "Both art and speculation are in their essence divine service--both are a living intuition of the absolute life and hence a being at one with it."²⁴

At first glance, then, Hegel's "System Program" may seem to be just a repetition of Schelling's ideas about "aesthetic consciousness," but it is not. Unlike Schelling, Hegel does not see art as such as our means of experiencing the Absolute. Instead, he speaks of the "highest act of Reason" as being an aesthetic act. Somehow, rational or philosophical thought itself must become aesthetic. But how? And how is this related to the

23. Hegel, System-Program, 511; Systemprogramm, 235. I have altered Harris's translation slightly.

24. Hegel, Difference, 172; Differenz, 77.

conception of a "Mythology of Reason?" And how is it related to "speculation"? The second question, at least, seems easily answered: it is clear that Hegel sees mythic thought as sensuous or poetic in form. Later in the "System Program" he writes: "Until we express the Ideas aesthetically, i.e. mythologically, they have no interest for the people, and conversely until mythology is rational the philosopher must be ashamed of it."²⁵ Hegel's system, then, as a "Mythology of Reason," will somehow meld "rational thought" with what I shall call "mytho-poetic" thought.

When Hegel claims that philosophy must become aesthetic or mythological, he is not recommending that philosophers write poetry, or even that they incorporate poetic elements into their work. Instead, Hegel is setting the stage for an entirely new type of thought, one that unites elements of rational and mytho-poetic thinking at a higher level. Hegel's project is analogous to Oetinger's theologia emblematica, which he held would uncover the "inner spiritual form" of the emblem or image, and would be an alternative to, on the one hand, a purely imaginative grasp of the divine, and, on the other, the "dead reason," of the abstract concept, which kills the truth the image contains. Like Oetinger, Hegel is advocating a "third position," one that is a completely new form of thought in

25. Hegel, System-Program, 511; Systemprogramm, 236.

which the truth is laid bare, and the inadequate forms of the pure image and the abstract concept are aufgehoben: both are cancelled, transcended, yet something of each is taken up and preserved in this new form. In the "System-Program" Hegel sees this new form as elevating poetic thought to a higher level: "Poetry gains thereby a higher dignity," he writes, "she becomes at the end once more what she was in the beginning: the teacher of mankind . . . "26

Here an obvious question arises: Doesn't Hegel reject "picture thinking," and isn't that precisely what "mythopoetic thinking" is? Hegel does indeed reject picture thinking, but he also rejects its opposite, "abstract" thinking.²⁷ When Hegel rejects a pair of opposites, however, one can be sure that they have not simply been rejected: they have been aufgehoben; they have been cancelled, but also taken up and preserved. Donald Phillip Verene makes this same point: "The thought of Vorstellung

26. Ibid., 511; 235.

27. Hegel writes in the Preface to the Phenomenology: "The habit of picture-thinking, when it is interrupted by the Concept [Begriff], finds it just as irksome as does formalistic thinking that argues back and forth in thoughts that have no actuality" (Miller, 35; PG, 43). H.S. Harris, in his introduction to his and Walter Cerf's translation of Faith and Knowledge, writes: "Speculative philosophy cannot possibly be 'abstract'. . . because it is a special kind of remembering (Hegel plays on the German word Erinnerung). The infinite that is within the finite, and reveals itself negatively in the perpetual perishing of the finite, reveals itself positively in the resurrection and perpetuation of the finite as a pattern of 'inwardized' or 'remembered' conceptual significance." See H.S. Harris, Editor's Introduction, in G.W.F. Hegel, Faith and Knowledge, ed. and trans. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 39-40.

must be aufgehoben in absolute knowing. The image of Vorstellung . . . must be there in absolute knowing in a transformed sense."²⁸ Hegel's speculation will be a "sublation" of the truth of Bild and the truth of Begriff. So how exactly does Hegel's speculation sublimate Bild and Begriff? How does it unite the mytho-poetic and the rational?

Unlike "picture-thinking"--poetry, myth, art, etc.--Hegel's speculation involves the use of concepts, ideas, or universals. Here, however, the dissimilarity ends, for although the matter of Hegel's philosophy--its employment of concepts rather than images--is substantially different from mytho-poetic thought, its form is strikingly similar.

Hegel's system is a complete conceptual speech about the whole, but it is not merely a network of abstract concepts. Instead it takes the form of a concrete totality. In the Introduction to the Phenomenology, Hegel defines philosophy as the "actual knowledge of what truly is" (Miller, 46; PG, 57).²⁹ In fact, his philosophical aim is the traditional one: to give an account of Substance,

28. Verene, 12. Hegel explains the meaning of aufheben in his Science of Logic: "Aufheben . . . constitutes one of the most important concepts in philosophy. . . . Aufheben has a twofold meaning in the language: on the one hand it means to preserve, to maintain, and equally it also means to cause to cease, to put an end to. . . . It is a delight to speculative thought to find in the language words which have in themselves a speculative meaning; the German language has a number of such" (Miller 106-107; WL I, 101).

29. Also: "[Philosophy's] element and content is not the abstract or non-actual, but the actual" (Miller, 47; PG, 34-35).

the really real.³⁰ However, it is the totality of the system that itself gives us this reality.³¹ Every "provisional definition of the Absolute" within the system, i.e., every category, must fall short because no one category can express all of what the Absolute is. Thus, the system does not describe the Absolute, it gives form to the Absolute itself. Hegel's philosophy does not tell us

30. Though, of course, Hegel's Substance reveals itself to be Subject. In the Preface Hegel writes: "The circle that remains self-enclosed and, like substance, holds its moments together, is an immediate relationship, one therefore which has nothing astonishing about it" (Miller, 18; PG, 25). Later in the Phenomenology, Hegel writes: "the side of reality is itself nothing else but the side of individuality" (die Seite der Wirklichkeit ist selbst nichts anders als die Seite der Individualität; Miller, 233; PG, 256). Elsewhere Hegel writes: "Spirit is thus self-supporting, absolute, real being." (Miller, 264; PG, 289) These observations correspond exactly to Aristotle's conception of Substance (*ousia*). In Hegel's 1830 lecture manuscript for the Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, he writes "it is proved in philosophy by speculative knowing that Reason--and we can adopt this expression for the moment without a detailed discussion of its relationship to God--is substance and infinite power . . . It is substance, i.e. that through which and in which all reality has its being and subsistence . . . Reason is self-sufficient and contains its end within itself; it brings itself into existence and carries itself into effect" (Nisbet, 27-28; VPG, 20-21). I shall discuss this topic more fully in Chapter Five. Hegel is not often clear about the differences between his concepts of "Reason," "Absolute" and "Spirit." Spirit is often treated as one moment of the system, the totality of which forms the Absolute. However, because Spirit is the consummating moment of the total system, he often seems to use "Spirit" and "Absolute" interchangeably. He uses "Reason" less often, but frequently in a way that seems equivalent to "Absolute."

31. Hegel writes in the System of Ethical Life, "What is truly universal is intuition, while what is truly particular is the absolute concept" (Harris, 100; Hegel, System der Sittlichkeit, Zweiter Auflage, ed. G. Lasson [Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1923], 415).

what substance or the Absolute is (in the manner, for instance, of Aristotle's philosophy), it brings the Absolute into being. Why? Because it is through speculation that the Idea becomes for-itself, that "God" achieves self-awareness and thus completion. This completed or actualized divine is the Absolute.³²

It is worthwhile in this context to repeat from the Introduction a fragment preserved by Rosenkranz:

Every individual is a blind link in the chain of absolute necessity, along which the world develops. Every individual can raise himself to domination over a great length of this chain only if he realizes the goal of this great necessity and, by virtue of this knowledge, learns to speak the magic words which evoke its shape. The knowledge of how to simultaneously absorb and elevate oneself beyond the total energy of suffering and antithesis that has dominated the world and all forms of its development for thousands of years--this knowledge can be gathered from philosophy alone.³³

The magic words are the categories of Hegelian philosophy. The magic power is dialectic guided by recollection. And,

32. "God is only God in so far as he knows Himself: this self-knowledge of God, becomes a self-knowledge in man, and man's knowledge of God . . . " (PS § 564; Wallace, 298).

33. Rosenkranz, 141.

as we shall shortly find, our access to this power is through a form of imagination.

It is important to see the radical difference between Hegelian thought and all other forms of philosophy. Non-Hegelian philosophy answers such questions as "what is God?" or "what is Being?" by equating its subject matter with some property or universal: "God is water" or "God is the Unmoved Mover" or "God is Nature." We can call this mode of thought propositional or predicative. It takes some object as given, and precedes to describe it by attaching one or more predicates to it, usually after lengthy argumentation.

The problem with this form of thought, as Hegel points out in the Preface to the Phenomenology, is that it draws a rigid distinction between subject and predicate (Miller, 38: PG, 47). We may arrive at the conclusion, after pages of argument, that "God is Good" but we know that the two terms are connotatively different. In short, the predicate does not exhaustively present the subject's nature to us. The predicate never fully captures the subject. We may decide to add other predicates: "God is Good," and "Just," and "All-knowing," etc. But unless we can demonstrate closure and completeness by giving some evidence that we have covered everything, our knowledge is not absolute (See LPR III, 271, 277-78; VPR, 196, 203).³⁴ Furthermore, if

34. O'Regan discusses this issue in The Heterodox Hegel (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 76.

our goal is to know God or the Absolute, this predicative or propositional approach is inherently incapable of giving us what we want. The predicate of a proposition always expresses a higher, wider, or more inclusive genus to which the subject belongs, e.g., "Man is Mortal," "Dogs are Mammals," etc. But Hegel conceives the Absolute as the Whole itself, as the ultimate category beyond which there is nothing higher which subsumes it. Hegel does not tell us what the Absolute is. Hegel's thought gives form to the Absolute itself. Yet the dialectic is driven precisely by the supercession of categories--"provisional definitions of the Absolute"--which purport to say what the Absolute is, but only say part. Hegel can say that his system is complete because it achieves closure as a circle of thought; his Encyclopedia is exactly what it sounds like, an en-circlement. His philosophical "method" (if it can be described as such) is qualitatively different from the propositional method of philosophy which I have described.

To borrow a term from the Jungian Erich Neumann, Hegel's speculation is circumscription. In his book The Origins and History of Consciousness, Neumann discusses mytho-poetic thought and its origins in the unconscious. Contrasting mytho-poetic thought with propositional thought, he writes:

The way of the unconscious is different. Symbols gather around the thing to be explained, understood, interpreted. The act of becoming conscious consists in the concentric grouping of symbols around the object, all circumscribing and describing the unknown from many sides. Each symbol lays bare another essential side of the object to be grasped, points to another facet of meaning. Only the canon of these symbols congregating about the center in question, the coherent symbol group, can lead to an understanding of what the symbols point to and of what they are trying to express.³⁵

Myth, in other words, does not attempt to pin down its subject matter by definitively predicating one or more qualities of it. It does not say "God is just_X" or "Nature is just_Y." Instead, it "talks around" its object, describing it in many, sometimes conflicting ways, each of which indicates something true about it. As Neumann says, only the canon of these symbols congregating about the center in question, only the whole, is true. The Egyptians, for instance, devised a number of different and mutually contradictory cosmologies, all of which they seemed to regard as equally true. As Henri and H.A.

35. Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954), 7; emphasis added.

Frankfort write: "The mythopoetic mind, tending toward the concrete, expressed the irrational, not in our manner, but by admitting the validity of several avenues of approach at one and the same time. . . . We should not doubt that mythopoetic thought fully recognizes the unity of each phenomenon which it conceives under so many different guises; the many-sidedness of its images serves to do justice to the complexity of the phenomena."³⁶

The form of Hegel's speculation is identical with mytho-poetic circumscription: Hegel rejects propositional thought which would define the Absolute, and instead "talks around" or "thinks around" the Absolute, revealing at each point some aspect or part of it. The totality of Hegel's philosophical speech is the Truth, the Absolute itself. The difference between Hegel's speculation and mytho-poetic thought is that the points through which his circle of truth is described are not primarily images, metaphors, or symbols, but concepts. Unlike conventional philosophical thought, however, he employs these concepts in a radically different way. The form of this thought is identical with mytho-poetic "circumscription." We can see, then, that Hegel has accomplished exactly what I described earlier: the creation of a new form of thought, which takes up and thus in a sense "unites" elements of both abstract,

36. Henri and H.A. Frankfort, "Introduction: Myth and Reality," in Henri Frankfort, et. al. The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 20.

philosophical thought, and mytho-poetic thought. His is truly a mythology of reason: a new myth-form made of ideas, a mytho-poetic creation which is not "concrete" in its elements but only in its totality, as the concrete universal, as the Absolute.³⁷

To employ a term that was important in Hegel's early philosophy of nature (and to which I shall return in later chapters), the Absolute is formed from the pure Aether of thought, literally. Hegel's philosophical speech is not a description of the Absolute, it is a literal formation of the Absolute using thought itself, the conceptual itself, as a plastic medium for the Absolute's realization as a concrete existent. What in Oetinger was a progressive corporealization of the "spirit body" has become in Hegel the "concrete universal." Just as in Oetinger, God or the Idea is becoming progressively "better embodied." First it exists in inchoate form, in nature, then in human projects and institutions, in art, in religion, and then finally it reaches perfection in an ideal medium: the pure Aether of thought realized in speculative philosophy. The Absolute is Aether body, Oetinger's Geistleiblichkeit.

None of this is meant to impute panlogism to Hegel, to re-open him to Krug's absurd challenge. The Logic has as

37. In the 1830 manuscript for the Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, Hegel writes that "the universal object is infinitely concrete, all-comprehending and omnipresent, for the Spirit is eternally present to itself; it has no past, and remains forever the same in all its vigour and strength" (Nisbet, 31; VIG 33).

its result that the Idea is consummated, and becomes Absolute, through its self-reflection. Each category of the Logic is a "provisional definition of the Absolute (or of the Idea)." This science constitutes an independent and self-contained totality of thought, forming a circle. But, as I have said, this science is only aetherial, in some sense unreal. The Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of Spirit are an account of the forms in which the Idea embodies itself, "seeking" the self-reflection conceived in the Logic. In Absolute Spirit, Absolute Idea, which is merely the concept of self-reflection, achieves actual self-reflection. Philosophy, the highest form of Spirit, is a complete account of Idea in-itself (Logic), become for-itself (Nature and Spirit). Nothing in this account is meant to imply that nature and Spirit are reduced to their fundamental categories. The whole point of these sciences is that they are an objectification of the Idea. Nevertheless, as I have said, it is through these three sciences--these three systems of categories--forming a "circle of circles" that Idea achieves actual self-reflection and becomes Absolute.

It might be objected that my comparison of Hegel's speculation with mytho-poetic thought leaves out the element of the transcendent, of the cthonic, of the numinous that is always present in mytho-poetic thought. Mythic circumscription, unlike propositional thought, does

not seek to make its object fully transparent. There is always a mysterious element of hiddenness, and a recurring theme concerning the punishment of the hubris of those who would know the transcendent. What could be more different from Hegel? Hegel rejects a transcendent Absolute and claims to have achieved Absolute Knowing. By Greek standards, Hegel is undeniably guilty of hubris. His Absolute is Spirit or Idea come to consciousness of itself through the activity of speculation: the divine (the Absolute) cannot be without humanity. It is man who "actualizes" God, and thus man becomes, if not God, then certainly a demigod.

Hegel's claim to have realized wisdom and ended the philosophical quest seems to be thus profoundly at odds with the mythic consciousness. However, Hegel can legitimately claim that he has completed or perfected mytho-poetic circumscription, and that this achievement is true and verifiable, not empty hubris. With mytho-poetic circumscription, as I have said, the aim is to surround the phenomenon, to reveal its aspects through images or stories. However, there is never any guarantee that the circle is complete, hence there always remains an element of mystery, the sense that the object always eludes us to some degree. Hegel, however, believes that he can demonstrate the closure of the circle. His system is a set of eidetic moments which turn back on themselves: the

highest moment of Spirit, Philosophy, is just the speech of all that has already been given, beginning with Being.

Thus, Hegel can claim with some plausibility that he has removed the mystery from the thought of the Absolute. He employs mythic circumscription, and uses concepts in a quasi-aesthetic manner, but, in a further departure from mytho-poetic thought proper, he has closed the circle and thereby transformed circumscription into an absolute science. Thus, Hegel's speculation is mytho-poetic circumscription applied to concepts, employing a "method" for the achievement of certainty.

4. Further Parallels Between Speculation and Myth

In his Myth and Philosophy, Lawrence J. Hatab contrasts mythic thought with conceptual reason on a number of points, allowing us to establish even more clearly the similarity of Hegelian speculation to mytho-poetic thought.³⁸

First, Hatab claims that "Myths express what is unique while concepts express what is common." This means that, "Myth does not subsume particular occurrences under general laws or abstract classifications."³⁹ As I have said, Hegel's aim is not to "understand" the Absolute by predicating universals of it, for the predicate of a

38. See Lawrence J. Hatab, Myth and Philosophy: A Contest of Truths (Lasalle: Open Court, 1990).

39. Ibid., 30-31.

proposition always subsumes the subject matter under a higher or more inclusive genus: "Germans are European," "Hegel is Human," etc. Hegel conceives the Absolute as the Whole itself and there is nothing higher or more inclusive than the Whole. Thus Hegel rejects a conceptual reason which seeks to understand its subject matter by subsuming it under a wider or higher category. In Hatab's terms, Hegel rejects conceptual reason precisely because his subject matter is unique, the fully concrete Concrete, the true individual.

Second, Hatab claims that, "In myth, there is no separation of form and content, thought and sensation."⁴⁰ This means that there is no rift in the mytho-poetic consciousness between the form of experience and the meaning-content it imparts: thunder is immediately experienced as the anger of the gods. There is no reflection on the nature of the process of sensation, which makes the sound of the thunder present to us, versus the meaning we attach to it. It is only the modern consciousness which can look at the experience of the ancients and say, "Well, all that was really happening was that they were experiencing such and such wave frequencies . . . etc." Henri and H.A. Frankfort write that modern science "creates an increasingly wide gulf between our perception of the phenomena and the conceptions by which we

40. Ibid., 30-31.

make them comprehensible. We see the sun rise and set, but we think of the earth as moving around the sun. We see colors, but we describe them as wave-lengths."⁴¹

Hegel saw the natural sciences as increasingly devaluing or nullifying ordinary experience and alienating the great bulk of humanity. Part of the aim of Hegel's system is to restore something of the "undivided consciousness" of the ancients. Like Rousseau, however, he does not seek to go back to the golden age, but to realize something of it in the modern age. Hegel does not reject modern scientific procedure and its method of explanation, but he does seek to heal the divide between intellectuals--scientists, philosophers--and laymen, the Platonic "wise" and "vulgar." This is the explicit goal of the "mythology of reason," as stated in the "System-Program."⁴²

In his system, Hegel thus sublates the data of the natural sciences of his time in a Philosophy of Nature. By giving humanity a God which expresses Himself (in part) in

41. Frankfort, 11.

42. Hegel writes, to repeat, "in the end enlightened and unenlightened must clasp hands, mythology must become philosophical in order to make the people rational, and philosophy must become mythological in order to make the philosophers sensible. Then reigns eternal unity among us. No more the look of scorn [of the enlightened philosopher looking down on the mob], no more the blind trembling of the people before its wise men and priests." (System-Program, 511-512; Systemprogramm, 236). In the Preface to the Phenomenology, Hegel writes of the need for systematic philosophy and states, "Only what is completely determined is at once exoteric, comprehensible, and capable of being learned and appropriated by all. The intelligible form of Science is the way open and equally accessible to everyone" (Miller, 7; PG, 11).

empirical, scientific principles, as well as ancient and modern philosophical concepts, he hoped to re-connect philosophy and science with the experience of the divine, and specifically with the concrete presence of the divine.⁴³ In the "System-Program" Hegel writes "we are told so often that the great mob must have a religion of the senses. But not only does the great mob need it, the philosopher needs it too" (Harris, 511; PG, 235).

Hegel's speculation is concerned with a unique, concrete object, the Absolute. What Hegel's system promises is a transformed experience of the world, in which we see familiar things in a new light: science, poetry, art, religion, the state, are all seen as expressions of or embodiments of the Absolute. Ordinary things suddenly take on new meaning. Those things which had been thought to be a human contrivance, carried out only for finite human ends, devoid of any higher meaning, mystery or religious significance--that is to say, what had been thought so quintessentially modern--is now suddenly imbued with spiritual significance, the full systematic scope of which can only be experienced by the typical consciousness as sublime. Thus, Hegel attempts to heal the rift in the modern consciousness between thought and sensation, or thought and experience, by giving us a new form of

43. In the Preface to the Phenomenology Hegel writes: "Let the other sciences try to argue as much as they like without philosophy--without it they can have in them neither life, Spirit, nor truth" (Miller, 41; PG, 50).

experience. The very modern scientific and philosophical ideas which formerly seemed to cut us off from experience and from our intuitions of the divine are now seen to be moments of a system of experience which constitutes the divine itself.⁴⁴ Hegel's system is an attempt to "re-enchant" the world, to re-invest nature with the experience of the numinous lost with the death of the mythical consciousness.

Third, Hatab claims that "Myth is passive and receptive while conceptual reason is active."⁴⁵ Hatab characterizes the "activity" of conceptual reason as involving "abstraction, analysis, synthesis, and judgement" which essentially take an object apart in order to get to its "real" nature.⁴⁶ Hegel, of course, calls these procedures of conceptual reason "the Understanding" (Verstand) and holds that if we are to know truth, we must rise above this level. Speculative philosophy, by contrast, is not creative, it is recollective. Speculative philosophy is not active, it is "essentially receptive, uncritical." The speculative philosopher is not in control of his thoughts. He is "enthralled" by what he is thinking about.

44. Hatab also characterizes the modern rift in terms of the "form-content" distinction. As is well known, Hegel explicitly claims in his Logic that he has transcended the form-content distinction.

45. Hatab, 33.

46. Ibid., 33.

Fourth, Hatab writes that, "In myth, language and the world are coextensive."⁴⁷ Words are not taken as mere "signs" for things, but are thought of as wedded to the things themselves, even as expressing the nature of things. Knowing an object's name was even thought to give the knower magical powers over it. This understanding of language is characteristic of the Hermetic tradition. For Hegel words do not carry a literal "magic power"--though, as we have seen, he does speak of the "magic words" which evoke the "shape" of the Absolute.⁴⁸ Hegel's completed speech of the Absolute is identical with its object. Hegel's system does not describe the Absolute, it realizes the Absolute itself. To speak of the Absolute and speak completely, is to speak the Absolute.⁴⁹ To give it voice is to give it being. Thus it is no stretch of the imagination to call words that invoke their object into being "magic words."

47. Ibid., 34.

48. Consider the following passage from the Preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit: "Now, because the system of the experience of Spirit embraces only the appearance of Spirit, the advance from this system to the Science of the True in its true shape seems to be merely negative, and one might wish to be spared the negative as something false, and demand to be led to the truth without more ado. Why bother with the false?" (Miller, 22 emphasis added; PG, 29).

49. Hegel writes in his Philosophy of Nature of 1803-04 that the "speaking of the Aether with itself is its reality . . . What it utters is itself, what speaks is itself, and that to which it speaks is again itself." Quoted in Harris, Night Thoughts, 243.

Fifth, Hatab claims that, "In myth there is no conceptual distinction between illusion and truth."⁵⁰ For the mythic mentality anything that is experienced may be meaningful. Thus dreams, which for the modern mentality are illusory, are deeply significant to the mytho-poetic mind. There is an analogue to this way of thinking in Hegel. The dialectic does not concern itself at each step with truth. In fact it moves by "canceling" false, partial or illusory positions. Speculation embraces the partial and the fake. All ideas are standpoints of consciousness on the way to Absolute Knowing. This is most obvious in the Phenomenology of Spirit, where numerous false and self-deluding standpoints--Sense Certainty, Stoicism, Scepticism, the Unhappy Consciousness, the Beautiful Soul, etc.--are transcended, but simultaneously regarded as necessary moments of the development of Spirit.

5. Imagination and the Symbolic Form

Something more must be said, though, about exactly how the transitions are made between the stages of the dialectic. The dialectic functions through recollection of the whole which it aims to fully articulate. Individual categories, "provisional definitions of the Absolute," prove inadequate, because of their failure to fully express our recollected intuition of what the whole is. They only

50. Hatab, 35.

say part. But what is the mechanism by which a new, further category is selected? In other words, how are the transitions made in the dialectic? To answer this question, we must examine the role of imagination in Hegel's system.

The connection between memory, imagination, and wisdom is found in the Hermetic tradition and its "art of memory." Antoine Faivre characterizes "active imagination"--"the essential component of esotericism"--as "a form of imagination inclined to reveal and use mediations of all kinds, such as rituals, symbolic images, mandalas, intermediary spirits."⁵¹ I want to suggest that Hegel's speculative activity be considered along the lines of "active imagination." "Imagination" suggests, of course, the image. It seems straightforwardly to be the faculty which produces images. But this is not its primary significance. Imagination consists fundamentally in a kind of ingenuity for giving form to something, sometimes to the truth.

Following Verene, I suggest that Hegel's transitions are made by the imaginative power of ingenium, or ingenuity: "Spirit requires an ingenious act, in which through an immediate act of its own wit it produces a new standpoint. It requires the power of ingenium. . . . Spirit must suddenly project a new reality for itself out

51. Antoine Faivre, Access to Western Esotericism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 12.

of a reality in which it finds itself becoming exhausted and dismembered."⁵² Verene continues, quoting the Preface to the Phenomenology (Miller, 32): "'Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being' . . . What is this magical power (Zauberkraft)? It is the power to form a new similitudo. This tarrying (Verweilen) with the negative is ingenium."⁵³ Ingenium is equivalent to Faivre's "active imagination": the subtext to the transitions in Hegel's dialectic is his use of recollected patterns of thought from the philosophical and mystical traditions.

As Verene discusses, part of the "recollection" of unconscious wisdom is the recollection of images and metaphors, which are the more natural and immediate form of access to the perennial philosophy. This requires that the philosopher return to and reappropriate forms of expression from the past. Goethe's appropriation of alchemical imagery and thought patterns in his natural philosophy provides a clear example. What consciousness remembers when it goes deeply into itself are archai. In Verene's words, "Archai come from nowhere. They come when needed and they come from nowhere. They are drawn forth from consciousness suddenly and without method, that is, without

52. Verene, 22; It should be noted that there is no concept of "method" in the modern sense implied here.

53. Ibid., 22.

some set procedure. Consciousness turns to itself and suddenly has in its hands something of itself that it did not know was there in any explicit sense. This drawing forth of archai is like recollecting. It is in fact recollecting in its primordial sense. It is Erinnerung."⁵⁴

Verene's remarks call to mind Jung's theory of the "archetype" and the "collective unconscious."⁵⁵ Like Jung, when I speak of the perennial philosophy or a primordial wisdom, I have in mind something laid up in Spirit, in non-propositional form, which structures and guides our lives, and shows itself in dreams, myth, poetry, and philosophy. That Hegel and the poets begin from such recollection should not seem surprising. There must be something there, in the beginning, for consciousness to work on. As Verene puts it, "The speech whereby consciousness has a beginning point never is derived from anything--it simply appears."⁵⁶

Hegel's speculation, as I have characterized it, is a sophisticated, post-Kantian reappropriation of the memory magic and "active imagination" of Hermetic thinkers such as Bruno. The doctrine of a perennial philosophy or of a "collective unconscious" was an Hermetic commonplace. It now becomes clear why and how Hegel could take alchemy and

54. Ibid., 24. In the Lectures on the History of Philosophy Hegel discusses Aristotle's topoi: "in them the points of view from which anything can be considered are enumerated. Cicero and Giordano Bruno worked this out more fully" (LHP II, 217; Werke 19, 235).

55. Verene (p. 64) refers to metaphors as drawn from the "collective unconscious" of man.

56. Ibid., 24.

the Kabbalah, and the thought of such men as Böhme, seriously. He saw them as expressions of the unconscious wisdom, of Spirit-in-itself, of the perennial philosophy. In this respect, Hegel was very much in tune with the spirit of his time, in which "There persisted a strong sense of the possibility that embedded in the accretions of alchemical literature lay important truths expressed in symbolic form."⁵⁷

What moves Hegel's dialectic, what gives form to his speculation, is his recovery of perennial "symbolic forms." Some of these show up as illustrative metaphors or images in Hegel's writing. Others are explicitly referred to only from time to time, but always seem to be at work beneath the surface, giving form to the system itself. These include the Hermetic-mystical symbolic forms of the triangle (the triad, or trinity), the square, the ennead, and the circle (the alchemical "ouroburos," which, incidentally, personifies Mercury or Hermes).

Hegel frankly admits that he is drawing on this perennial resource. In the Preface to the Phenomenology he writes: "the triadic form must not be regarded as scientific when it is reduced to a lifeless schema, a mere shadow . . . Kant rediscovered this triadic form by instinct, but in his work it was still lifeless and

57. Charles Webster, From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 10.

uncomprehended; since then it has, however, been raised to its absolute significance, and with it the true form in its true content has been presented, so that the Concept of Science has emerged" (Miller, 29; PG, 37).

The reference to Kant having rediscovered (wiedergefundne) the triadic form indicates that Hegel regards it as a perennial idea. It also indicates that he regards himself as truly reviving and doing justice to the triadic form, as well as raising it to the level of "science" (Wissenschaft).⁵⁸ In the Science of Logic (1812) a similar passage appears: "Kant did not apply the infinitely important form of triplicity--with him it manifested itself at first only as a formal spark of light--to the genera of his categories (quantity, quality, etc.), but only to their species which, too, alone he called categories. Consequently he was unable to hit on the third

58. This passage from the Phenomenology is often distorted by well-meaning commentators who see Hegel's apparent obsession with triadic form as an embarrassing superstition. For instance, Gustav Müller treats the passage as follows: "According to the Hegel legend one would expect Hegel to recommend this 'triplicity.' But, after saying that it was derived from Kant, he calls it a 'lifeless schema'. . . ." See Müller, "The Hegel Legend of 'Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis,'" in The Hegel Myths and Legends, ed. Jon Stewart (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 302. Müller, however, completely distorts what Hegel has said. As I have pointed out, Hegel says that Kant rediscovered triadic form, not that it derives from Kant! Further, Hegel says (in Miller's translation) that triadic form is unscientific "when it is reduced to a lifeless schema" (emphasis added). He does not say that it is always a "lifeless schema." A cursory glance at the structure of Hegel's system shows that he thought there was some life in this old schema yet.

to quantity and quality" (Miller, 327; WL I, 365).⁵⁹

Consider also one of the Zusätze to the Encyclopedia Logic, in which Hegel remarks that "Any division is to be considered genuine when it is determined by the Concept. So genuine division is, first of all, tripartite; and then, because particularity presents itself as doubled, the division moves on to fourfoldness as well. In the sphere of spirit trichotomy predominates, and it is one of Kant's merits to have drawn attention to this" (EL § 230, Z; Geraets, 298).

In the next section, I will discuss Hegel's use of triadicity, by way of a discussion of the "triangle fragment" and the "triangle diagram." As to the square, the third of the twelve theses composed and defended by Hegel as part of his doctoral exam in Jena in 1801 reads as follows: "The square is the law of nature, the triangle of spirit."⁶⁰

59. The "third" Hegel refers to is Measure.

60. G.W.F. Hegel, Philosophical Dissertation on the Orbits of the Planets (1801) Preceded by the 12 Theses Defended on August 27, 1801, trans. Pierre Adler, Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal 1 (1987): 269-309; 276. Hegel does not waiver from this proposition in later years. In the lectures on the Philosophy of Nature given in the Berlin period (in the years 1819-1830), Hegel states that "in Spirit the fundamental form of necessity is the triad" (PN § 248, Z; Petry I, 211). The triangle and square represent, of course, threeness and fourness. Seven, the sum of three and four, is a powerful number in the Hermetic tradition. Julius Evola writes: "Metaphysically, Seven expresses the Three added to the Four Seven is the manifestation of the creative principles (triad) in relation to the world made up of the four elements; the full expression of nature creating nature (natura naturans)

In his early philosophy of nature, Hegel conceives nature as containing within itself "resting motion," which involves four dimensions: three spatial, and one temporal. He refers to this as the "squareness" of nature.⁶¹

(Spirit, by contrast, is a triangle composed of the dimensions of time itself: past, present, and future.) As Harris sums up Hegel's early views: "The eternal reality for theoretical contemplation by the mind is a four dimensional spatio-temporal equilibrium. 'Squareness' is the simplest schema for this that we can construct in pure intuition."⁶² Heinz Kimmerle has suggested that Hegel attempted to "map" the parts of his early, quadripartite system onto the four moments of "resting motion."⁶³ In the next section we will see how the square works into Hegel's discussion of the "Divine Triangle." I will have more to say about Hegel's endorsement of the doctrine of the four elements later.

As to the ennead, Hegel's system as a whole is a triad, each element of which is a separate science, divided according to three chief moments, which are analyzed in turn into three constitutive moments, which are themselves analyzed into their three constitutive moments. This means that each major subdivision of each science is a triad of

in action." See Evola, The Hermetic Tradition, trans. E.E. Rehmus (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1995), 52.

61. Harris, Night Thoughts, 86-87; 90-91.

62. Ibid., 90.

63. "Dokumente zu Hegels Jenaer Dozententätigkeit (1801-1807)," Hegel-Studien 4 (1967): 21-100.

enneads, "nines" (meaning that each science is an ennead of enneads). The "Doctrine of Being" in the Logic is subdivided into Quality, Quantity and Measure. Quality is subdivided into Being, Determinate Being, and Being-for-self. Being is subdivided into Being, Nothing, and Becoming. And so on. The system is a triad of triads of triads of triads of triads.

Hegel describes his system in the Encyclopedia Logic, however, as a "circle of circles": "The whole . . . presents itself as a circle of circles, each of which is a necessary moment, so that the system of its peculiar elements constitutes the whole Idea--which equally appears in each single one of them" (EL § 15; Geraets, 39). Circularity, as I have shown, is a perennial image associated with Hermetic and mystical thought. I have mentioned in earlier chapters the presence of circle imagery in the Hermetica, and in Eckhart, Böhme, and Goethe. Interestingly, the phrase hen kai pan or hen to pan is associated with the alchemical symbol of the ourobuos. The Greek phrase is often written inside or around the serpent.⁶⁴ Erich Neumann, in his The Origins and History of Consciousness, suggests that the ourobuos as not just an alchemical symbol, but is an archetype of

64. See Allison Coudert, Alchemy: The Philosopher's Stone (London: Wildwood House, 1980), 142. Hen kai pan is also sometimes symbolized by a cosmic egg. See also Allison Coudert, Leibniz and the Kabbalah (Boston: Kluwer, 1995), 95.

the collective unconscious symbolizing the original unity of all things and the return to that unity.⁶⁵

My suggestion, then, is that what "moves" the dialectic or gives shape to speculation is Hegel's imaginative recollection and utilization of images and "thought forms" drawn from the "collective unconscious" of the race. Many of these forms are Hermetic in their origins or associations. Not only does Hegel, as I have shown, admit this connection, he seems to frankly revel in it. In his early Philosophy of Nature Hegel refers reverently to "the Elders," which H.S. Harris has argued refers to both Paracelsus and Böhme.⁶⁶ As Harris notes, even where Hegel is drawing from more recent sources he insists, "on finding an earlier pedigree . . . in Paracelsus and Böhme."⁶⁷

65. See Neumann, 5-38. Julius Evola in his The Hermetic Tradition traces the phrase "hen to pan" and its connection to the ouroboros to the alchemical Chrysopoeia of Cleopatra (Marciano codex [Venice], ms. 2325. fol. 188b; and ms. 2327, fol. 196). He writes (pp. 20-21) "The alchemical ideogram of 'One the All,' is 0, the circle: a line or movement that encloses within itself and contains in itself both its end and beginning. In Hermetism this symbol expresses the universe and, at the same time, the Great Work [i.e. the preparation of the Philosopher's Stone]. . . . This 'all' has also been called chaos ('our' chaos), and egg . . . because it contains the undifferentiated potentiality of every development or generation: it sleeps in the depths of each being as a sensed myth, to use Olympiodorus's expression, and it extends to the chaotic multiplicity of scattered things and forms in space and time here below."

66. Harris, Night Thoughts, 274fn.

67. Ibid., 278.

Hegel's attitude toward the Hermetic tradition was cautious, but cautiously approving. On the terms I have set out in this chapter, Hegel had to see the Hermetic tradition as a manifestation of unconscious wisdom, of the perennial philosophy, struggling to transcend its purely sensuous form. This explains his strongly positive attitude to Böhme, even though Böhme grossly violates Hegel's prohibition on "picture-thinking." Hegel's claim is that Böhme comes close to the truth, even though he is caught in "the hard, knotty oak of the senses." What accounts for Böhme's inspiration? My contention is that Hegel would have to admit that eternal truth simply happens to "well up" in certain special individuals, in the form of certain archetypal forms of expression. Hegel refers to religions as "sprouting up fortuitously, like the flowers and creations of nature, as foreshadowings, images, representations, without [our] knowing where they come from or where they are going to" (LPR I, 196; VPR I, 106). Hegel states that, "Religion is a begetting of the divine spirit, not an invention of human beings but an effect of the divine at work, of the divine productive process within humanity" (LPR I, 130; VPR I, 46). Recall the Zusatz to the Encyclopedia Logic quoted earlier: "It should . . . be mentioned here that the meaning of the speculative is to be

understood as being the same as what used in earlier times to be called the 'mystical'. . . "68

Notice, however, that the archai that Hegel adopts as imaginative "guides" to speculation (i.e, at the level of "meta-speculation") are all mathematical or geometrical. To be sure, other sorts of "images" occur in Hegel, but only as illustrations of his concepts. In an "aphorism" from the "Wastebook" (written between 1803 and 1806), Hegel

68. The passage reads more fully as follows: "It should . . . be mentioned here that the meaning of the speculative is to be understood as being the same as what used in earlier times to be called 'mystical' When we speak of the 'mystical' nowadays, it is taken to be synonymous with what is mysterious and incomprehensible; and, depending on the ways their culture and mentality vary in other respects, some people treat the mysterious and incomprehensible as what is authentic and genuine, whilst others regard it as belonging to the domain of superstition and deception. About this we must remark first that 'the mystical' is certainly something mysterious, but only for the understanding, and then only because abstract identity is the principle of the understanding. But when it is regarded as synonymous with the speculative, the mystical is the concrete unity of just those determinations that count as true for the understanding only in their separation and opposition. So if those who recognise the mystical as what is genuine say that it is something utterly mysterious, and just leave it at that, they are only declaring that for them, too, thinking has only the significance of an abstract positing of identity, and that in order to attain the truth we must renounce thinking, or, as they frequently put it, that we must 'take reason captive.' As we have seen, however, the abstract thinking of the understanding is so far from being something firm and ultimate that it proves itself, on the contrary, to be a constant sublating of itself and an overturning into its opposite, whereas the rational as such is rational precisely because it contains both of the opposites as ideal moments within itself. Thus, everything rational can equally be called 'mystical'; but this only amounts to saying that it transcends the understanding. It does not at all imply that what is so spoken of must be considered inaccessible to thinking and incomprehensible" (EL § 82, Z; Geraets, 133; emphasis added).

states: "In philosophizing there is nothing to be represented. Now and then there is an image. Men cling to this. The tabula rasa of Aristotle is accidental and used as a makeshift. Everyone is familiar with this. However, it does not express the essence of Aristotle's concept of the soul."⁶⁹ In short, metaphors or images are a bonus, an aid to understanding only. In order to be understood, from time to time, Hegel must write, as Jakob Böhme would put it, "according to a creaturely way and manner, otherwise you could not understand." Many of Hegel's images or archetypes are drawn from the Hermetic-alchemical and mystical traditions, as I will show in later chapters. (These include "caput mortuum," "Om," "Aether," and the four elements.) But in terms of Hegel's "meta-philosophy" his guiding images are mathematical-geometrical alone. (In the next section I will explore the image of the triangle.)

What are we to make, then, of the following remark from Hegel's 1805 Lectures on the History of Philosophy? "[There is a] method of representing the universal content by means of numbers, lines and geometric figures. These are figurative, but not concretely so, as in the case of myths. Thus it may be said that eternity is a circle, the snake that bites its own tail [i.e., the ourobueros; see above]. This is only an image, but Spirit does not require

69. G.W.F. Hegel, Aphorisms from the Wastebook, trans. Susanne Klein, David L. Roochnik and George Elliott Tucker, Independent Journal of Philosophy 3 (1979): 1-6; 5. Werke, Vol. 1, 562.

such a symbol. There are people who value such methods of representation, but these forms do not go far" (LHP I, 88; Werke 18, 109-110).⁷⁰ This sounds as if Hegel is rejecting the use of symbolic forms altogether, but that is not the case. He is simply saying that the use of geometrical images, like all images, is limited and not fully adequate for the presentation of philosophical wisdom; images cannot replace the "conceptual" language of philosophy. But my claim about Hegel's "symbolic forms" is not that they are forms which occur in the text, but that they are forms which lie beneath the text, structuring it, although to be sure, we do find Hegel sometimes explicitly reflecting on these forms--as in the famous "circle of circles" passage.

6. The "Divine Triangle" and the Triangle Diagram

I turn now to what we may regard as an early, fascinating, but abortive attempt on Hegel's part to

70. Hegel makes similar remarks in the Science of Logic: "To take numbers and geometrical figures (as the circle, triangle, etc. have often been taken), simply as symbols (the circle, for example, as a symbol for eternity, the triangle, of the Trinity), is so far harmless enough; but, on the other hand, it is foolish to fancy that in this way more is expressed than can be grasped and expressed by thought. Whatever profound wisdom may be supposed to lie in such meagre symbols or in those richer products of fantasy in the mythology of peoples and in poetry generally, it is properly for thought alone to make explicit for consciousness the wisdom that lies only in them; and not in symbols, but in nature and in mind. In symbols the truth is dimmed and veiled by the sensuous element; only in the form of thought is it fully revealed to consciousness: the meaning is only the thought itself" (Miller, 215; WL I, 228-29).

realize the Mythology of Reason: the so-called "Divine Triangle" Fragment. The "Divine Triangle" shows Hegel's conscious reappropriation of Hermetic thought, as well as his "return" to Christianity. In Hegel's early musings on the "new religion" there was something vaguely anti-Christian about the whole project; a charge that Christianity is somehow "unnatural." Certainly there is nothing "Christian" about the "System-Program" fragment, no suggestion that its Mythology of Reason is to involve a revivification of Christian myth. With the "Divine Triangle," however, Hegel seems to make his peace with Christianity. Part of the project of the Mythology of Reason now seems to be a reconciliation between conceptual reason and a specifically Christian mythos.

The "Divine Triangle" fragment no longer survives. A description of it, as well as some quotations, were preserved by Rosenkranz. It was probably written in 1801, certainly no later than 1802.⁷¹ The manuscript may have been accompanied by diagrams, none of which survive. (Hegel's "triangle diagram," to be discussed shortly, does not correspond to the remarks in the "Divine Triangle" fragment.)

In his discussion of the fragment, Rosenkranz asserts that it belongs to a "theosophical" phase in Hegel's

71. Harris, Night Thoughts, 179.

development.⁷² In fact, Rosenkranz claims that the "theosophical" phase begins in the Frankfurt period. (This is interesting, for one thing, because, as noted in the last chapter, Hegel's time in Frankfurt was marked by an association with Freemasonry.) Rosenkranz claims that Hegel abandoned the approach of the "Triangle" fragment because "the lack of correspondence between the image-form and the form of pure thinking became too great."⁷³ This view is wrongheaded. As we shall see, the "Triangle" fragment is heavily laden with mytho-poetic language and preoccupied with what Rosenkranz calls "geometrizing," but this is all to be found in the later writings, especially the Phenomenology of Spirit, the Logic and the Philosophy of Nature.

Rosenkranz suggests that Hegel may have been inspired in part by the works of Franz von Baader. As was discussed in Chapter One, Hegel engaged in a lifelong endeavour to curry Baader's favor. This must be regarded as quite peculiar, as Baader was the leading occultist of his era, dismissed by many as a crank. In particular, Rosenkranz suggests that it was Baader's 1798 essay On the Pythagorean Square in Nature or the Four Regions of the World which served as Hegel's source for the "Triangle" fragment. H.S.

72. Karl Rosenkranz, "Hegels ursprüngliches System 1798-1806," Literarhistorisches Taschenbuch 2 (1844): 157-164; 157. Translated in Harris, Night Thoughts, 184.

73. Ibid., 159; Harris, 184.

Harris (drawing on the research of Helmut Schneider) summarizes this essay as follows:

In Baader's essay the 3 domains of natural history (animal, vegetable, mineral) and the 3 types of matter (combustible, salty, earthy) are subordinated under 3 'basic forces' or 'principles' (fire, water, earth). These elements would remain inert, however, were it not for the 4th principle (air) which enlivens them. The relation of the 4 elements is symbolically portrayed as a triangle with a point in the middle (representing air). This symbol (triangle with a point) Baader calls Quaternarius or Pythagorean Square.⁷⁴

The alchemical, and specifically Paracelsian, influence on Baader's triads and his symbolism is clear.

As Harris points out, the triangle with central point was also used by Böhme.⁷⁵ Rosenkranz suggests a Böhmean influence on the Hegelian "Triangle" fragment. As we shall see, it is Böhme's influence (and perhaps also that of Oetinger) that is indeed decisive.⁷⁶ Another likely

74. Ibid., 159; Harris, 184.

75. Harris, Night Thoughts, 185fn.

76. Harris writes: "Hegel's attitude to Böhme in 1804 to 1806 is critically appreciative, but he consistently attacks the direct acceptance of Böhme's metaphors and symbols as the simple truth. See esp. the Wastebook, items 45 and 48 (Rosenkranz, pp. 546, 547 and 199). So if we project this attitude back to an earlier period when Hegel

influence on Hegel is Proclus. In his Lectures on the History of Philosophy of 1805, Hegel devotes considerable space to Proclus and treats him approvingly. Hegel's summary of Proclus's philosophy focusses on the latter's use of the "triad."⁷⁷

Rosenkranz's summary of the "Triangle" fragment is as follows:

To express the life of the Idea, [Hegel] constructed a triangle of triangles, which he suffered to move through one another in such a way that each one was not only at one time extreme and at another time middle generally, but also it had to go through this process internally with each of its sides. And then, in order to maintain the ideal plasticity of unity amid this rigidity and crudity of intuition, to maintain the fluidity of the distinctions represented

was less discontented with pictorial modes of expression generally, we might fairly take the triangle fragment as an attempt to develop what Hegel took to be Böhme's meaning in Böhme's own mode" (Ibid., 185fn). My one quarrel with Harris here is that Hegel never becomes dissatisfied with the sort of "pictorial modes of expression" discussed in the preceding section: the meta-dialectical "symbolic forms" of the triangle, circle, etc.

77. As Cyril O'Regan writes: "Hegel applauds the noetic register of Proclus, where the latter in the Platonic Theology understands the Triad of Triads as the self-thinking thought of the divine [Proclus's] dynamic, process Triad of Being-Life-Intellect bears more than a superficial resemblance to the dynamic, process Hegelian Triad of Being-Essence-Concept, especially since Hegel does think his basic triad exemplary of identity, difference, and the union of identity and difference" (O'Regan, Heterodox Hegel, 103).

as triangle and sides, he went on consistently to the further barbarity of expressing the totality as [a] square resting over the triangles and their process.

But he seems to have got tired in the following out of his labour; at any rate he broke off at the construction of the animal [Thier].⁷⁸

H.S. Harris has offered an ingenious and thought-provoking reconstruction of the geometrical theosophy of the "Triangle" fragment, but as we cannot be sure that it expresses what Hegel actually had in mind, I will not go through the details of Harris's reconstruction here.⁷⁹

As Rosenkranz points out, Hegel's preoccupation with triadicity does not simply reflect an infatuation with Böhmean symbolism, but also a conscious attempt to embrace the Christian Trinity, to bring it into philosophical speculation. Rosenkranz writes: "He wanted now to grasp the Trinity in the triangle of triangles. He wanted at

78. Rosenkranz, 160; Harris, 185. It is worth noting here the similarity to Hegel's treatment of the "circle of circles" in the Encyclopedia Logic of 1817: "Each of the parts of philosophy is a philosophical whole, a circle that closes upon itself; but in each of them the philosophical Idea is in a particular determinacy or element. Every single circle also breaks through the restriction of its element as well, precisely because it is inwardly [the] totality, and it grounds a further sphere. The whole presents itself therefore as a circle of circles, each of which is a necessary moment, so that the system of its peculiar elements constitutes the whole idea--which equally appears in each single one of them" (EL § 15; Geraets, 39).
 79. See also Helmut Schneider's attempted reconstruction in his "Anfänge der Systementwicklung Hegels in Jena," Hegel-Studien, 10 (1975): 133-171.

this date, not to banish this image from himself as irrational, in which the faith had for centuries revered its highest possession."⁸⁰ Rosenkranz goes on to point to Hegel's interest (starting, it seems, in his Berne period) in Christian mystics such as Eckhart and Tauler.

The influence of the doctrine of the Trinity shows itself in Hegel's claim in the "Triangle" fragment that, "A more intelligible expression for the notion of God as the universal life [Allebens] is the term Love, but a deeper one is Spirit."⁸¹ Insofar as it is possible to penetrate the obscurity of the lines Rosenkranz quotes from the "Triangle" fragment, it appears that the triangles represent the process of God's coming to consciousness of Himself. This is what is meant by Spirit (what Hegel will later call "Absolute Spirit"). There appear to be three triangles in all, with the "triangle of triangles" being the figure made up by the set of the three.

The first triangle is described by Hegel as follows:
"In this First, which is at the same time only One side of

80. Rosenkranz, 161; Harris, 185.

81. Harris writes that "'Spirit is deeper' as a name of God because it names a self-cognitive experience" (Harris, Night Thoughts, 163). Rosenkranz paraphrases this line in his account. The line, as I have given it, appears as a direct quotation from the fragment in Haym's Hegel und seine Zeit (Berlin, 1857), 101. Oetinger also gave Love a central place in his thought, as Robert Schneider notes: "Love is thus the highest knowledge-form [Erkenntnisform], because in it the beloved [Geliebte] is entirely contained within the soul, because you [du] and I become identical." See Robert Schneider, Schellings und Hegels schwäbische Geistesansichten (Würzburg-Aumühle: Konrad Triltsch Verlag, 1938), 84.

the absolutely unique Triangle, there is only the Godhead in reciprocal intuition and cognition with Himself." This cannot help but remind us of Böhme's description of God "in Himself." Recall that Böhme's first three spirits--Sour, Sweet, and Bitter--form a primordial Trinity of conflict within the Godhead, preceding its manifestation. They are a triad of the unmanifest God or God-in-Himself. David Walsh writes: "Hegel suggested, as Böhme also did, that the first Trinity of God in himself is not sufficient for the divine self-revelation."⁸² In fact, Hegel's account of the Trinity here is quite similar to his account of Böhme's Trinity in the Lectures on the History of Philosophy (LHP III, 197-214; Werke 20, 99-116).

Hegel continues: "[The Idea of the Godhead is that] in which the pure light of unity is the middle, and whose sides are likewise the pure raying outwards, and the pure refraction of the ray back into itself."⁸³ Light, for Böhme, is the pure principle of openness, of manifestation without any hiddenness. Fire, for Böhme, is the kindling of light within the darkness that is God in Himself. This seems to be something like what Hegel is aiming at here: light comes to be within the Idea that is the triangle of God in Himself. It "rays" outwards. This is "God the Father." The second triangle is "God the Son." Hegel

82. See David Walsh, The Esoteric Origins of Modern Ideological Thought: Böhme and Hegel (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1978), 321.

83. Rosenkranz, 163; Harris, 187.

writes: "In the Son, God is cognizant of Himself as God. He says to Himself: I am God. The within-itself ceases to be a negative."⁸⁴ The triangle of the Son is the consummation of the light that is kindled in the triangle of the Father (or the Idea). "The within-itself ceases to be negative" means something analogous to Böhme's transformation of the "in-Himself" of God (Sour-Sweet-Bitter) into God become for- Himself through Heat, Love, Tone, and Body.

Hegel continues:

The distinction and the wealth of God's self-consciousness is reconciled [in the triangle of the Son] with His simplicity, and the realm of the Son of God is also the realm of the Father. The self-consciousness of God is not a withdrawal back within Himself and an otherness of the Son, just as it is not an otherness of His withdrawal back within Himself as simple God, but His intuition in the Son is the intuiting of the simple God as His own self, but in such a way that the Son remains Son, or as not distinguished and at the same time distinguished; or

84. Obviously with the Logos in mind, Harris writes of this passage: "The Absolute Being, the Father, utters himself as the son. He says what he is in order that he may himself know what he is. The Universe as a totality is this 'saying'" (Night Thoughts, 164). It is interesting in this context to recall what Böhme says about Ton (see Chapter One).

the farspread Realm of the Universe, which has no longer any being-for-self over against itself, but rather its being-for-self is a returning back within God, or is God's returning back within Himself, a joy over the majesty of the Son whom He intuitis as Himself.⁸⁵

Here Hegel is expressing the identity-in-difference of the Father and Son. The Son is a distinct moment from the Father, yet the Son is God, in that it is in the Son that the Father becomes actual as God.

Hegel writes further of this triangle of the Son: "In the Second [Triangle] God's intuiting has stepped over to one side. He has come into connection with Evil and the middle is the bad[ness] of the mixing of both. But this triangle becomes a Square, in that the pure Godhead floats above it." I have little to say about how the "square" figures in here (Harris has his own conjectures). The "geometrical" aspects to this fragment are difficult to understand completely. What is more important here is the role played by Evil. Walsh writes of this section of the fragment that "creation separated from God is the evil reality."⁸⁶ With the Son, difference is introduced into the Godhead. It provides for God's actualization as God, but it is difference, division, opposition nonetheless.

85. Rosenkranz, 162; Harris, 186-187.

86. Walsh, Boehme and Hegel, 320.

Taken on its own, this opposition is evil. Evil is the part attempting to stand on its own, to stand in for the whole. In Böhme, as I noted in Chapter One, Lucifer represents the will to isolation, cutting-off, a selfishness that all things exhibit. (I will discuss the role of evil in Hegel's philosophy much more extensively in the following chapter.)

The separated moment of that which stands opposed to the Godhead must be "transfigured" and brought into unity within God. Hegel writes "the Son must go right through the Earth, must overcome Evil, and in that he steps over to one side as the victor, must awaken the other, the self-cognition of God, as a new cognition that is one with God, or as the Spirit of God: whereby the middle becomes a beautiful, free, divine middle, the Universe of God."⁸⁷ This heralds the arrival of a new triangle, presumably of the Holy Spirit (though Hegel is not clear about this).

That the Son must pass over into a third stage of the Spirit is, however, obvious. Consider the following, which occurs earlier in what Rosenkranz has preserved for us: "What stands over against the Son in his majesty as He intuites the Earth, is the majesty of God Himself, the looking back and returning home to Him. And for the consecrated Earth this self-consciousness of God is the

87. Rosenkranz, 163; Harris, 187-188.

Spirit, which proceeds from God, and in which the Earth is one with Him and with the Son."⁸⁸

Hegel writes further of Spirit in the following:

This Spirit is here the eternal mediator between the Son returned unto the Father, who is now wholly and only one, and between the being of the son within himself, or of the majesty of the Universe. The simplicity of the all-embracing Spirit has now stepped into the middle and there is now no distinction any more. For the Earth as the self-consciousness of God is now the Spirit, yet it is also the eternal son whom God intuitively as Himself. Thus has the holy triangle of triangles closed itself. The First [triangle] is the Idea of God which is carried out in the other triangles, and returns into itself by passing through them.⁸⁹

If what Rosenkranz has preserved of the "Triangle" fragment is examined carefully, it becomes obvious that in it is to be found the blueprint of Hegel's entire system. The nature of his Logic is expressed here very clearly: the first "triad" of the system (in the later Logic, Being-Essence-Concept) is the "Idea of God." In the Science of Logic, in a well-known passage, Hegel declares that his aim

88. Rosenkranz, 162; Harris, 187; italics in original.

89. Rosenkranz 162-163; Harris, 187.

is "the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite Spirit" (Miller, 50; WL I, 33-34). This Idea is expressed (made real) in the triads of the Son (Philosophy of Nature: Mechanics, Physics, Organics)⁹⁰ and Spirit (Subjective, Objective, and Absolute Spirit). Toward the end of what Rosenkranz quotes of the "Triangle" manuscript, Hegel even employs emanation imagery to describe the relation of the first triad of the Idea of God to the others: "through the second triangle of the Son, the Third has immediately formed itself, the return of all into God Himself, or the having-been-poured-out [das Ausgegossensein] of the Idea overall."⁹¹ In the transition to Nature at the end of the Science of Logic, Hegel writes: "the Idea freely releases itself in its absolute self-sufficiency and stasis" (die Idee sich selbst frei entlässt, ihrer absolut sicher und in sich ruhend; Miller, 843; WL III, 305). The "Idea of God" becomes the "Universe of God" (see above): the Idea becomes concrete, embodied. Here again we see the influence of Böhme and Oetinger.

It might be claimed that a major difference between the doctrine of the "Triangle" fragment and Hegel's mature philosophy is that the former describes the Earth as "the self-consciousness of God." On closer examination,

90. In a Zusatz to the Philosophy of Nature (Berlin period, 1819-1830), Hegel remarks that "Nature is the Son of God . . ." (PN § 247, Z; Petry I, 206).

91. Rosenkranz 164; Harris, 188.

however, there is no disparity. As we have seen, Hegel claims that "the Earth as the self-consciousness of God is now the Spirit." Nature itself (excluding man) is one form in which the Idea of God finds concrete expression. But God's self-consciousness is achieved only through a natural (terrestrial) being which simultaneously rises above nature to the ideal: mankind or Spirit.

Writing of the transfigured Earth as the "Universe of God," Hegel says: "This Second Triangle is (qua being in the separation) herewith itself a twofold Triangle, or its two sides are each a triangle, the one the converse of the other, and the middle is in this movement of history the all-effecting force of the absolute unity that floats above the first, and takes this up into itself and changes it into another within itself. But what is visible, that is the two triangles, but the middle is only the invisible might at work in the inward [soul]."⁹² This passage is exceedingly obscure, but we can immediately glean from it that even in this early manuscript Hegel is speaking of God's achievement of self-consciousness as an historical process. Could the "invisible might at work in the inward [soul]" be equivalent to the "cunning of Reason"?

This manuscript was obviously not intended by Hegel for publication. It constitutes notes to himself. Its baffling, frenzied style indicates that Hegel was rushing

92. Rosenkranz 163-164; Harris, 188; Harris interpolates "soul."

to get his inspirations onto paper, to give himself a rough outline of his system, a roadmap for where he was going. This is the earliest such fragment or manuscript to indicate the entirety of the system in its outlines. What is so striking is how indebted Hegel obviously is to Hermeticism. The chief debt is clearly to Böhme. But there is also evidence of the influence of Baader, Oetinger, Eckhart, and Proclus.⁹³ Even more striking is the way in which the entire text is ruled by a concern for an exact fit between speculative truth and geometric form.

As I have already noted, the triangle diagram which has survived does not appear to be an illustration of the ideas of the triangle fragment. H.S. Harris concurs in this judgment, stating, rather enigmatically, that the diagram "belongs in the context of magical speculation . . ."⁹⁴ We do not know when Hegel made this diagram. We do not even know with certainty that he made it. Nevertheless, it was found in Hegel's papers and has always

93. See my Introduction for a treatment of Proclus as an Hermetic figure.

94. Harris, Night Thoughts, 157. Harris writes that the "philosophical background to the symbolism is Neo-Pythagorean, rather than Christian." I do not see what would incline one to this judgement, as opposed, for instance, to the judgement that the symbolism is "Neo-Paracelsian" or "Neo-Aggripian" or "Neo-Böhmean." Helmut Schneider also holds that the diagram does not illustrate the fragment, for obvious reasons: "The text describes a triangle of triangles, whereas the drawing shows a triangle with triangles." See Schneider, "Zur Dreiecks-Symbolik bei Hegel" Hegel-Studien 8 (1973): 55-77; 57 (my translation). This is one of the very few discussions of this drawing in print.

been attributed to him. It was first published in 1937 in G. Stuhlfauth's Das Dreieck, and has since been very seldom reprinted.⁹⁵

I have reproduced the diagram as Figure 1. It is drawn partly in pen, partly in pencil, on cheap, gray-brown paper. The drawing's major components are four triangles: one large central triangle and three others at each of its points. They are all pointing in the same direction, but it is uncertain whether the drawing is to be positioned so that the triangles point up or down, or to one side or the other. Helmut Schneider prints it with the triangles pointed down, as does Häussermann. Around the sides of the large triangle is a collection of bizarre symbols. The word Spiritus appears three times, each time at the left end of one of the sides (the "S" at the beginning of the word is also written in pencil, whereas the rest of the word is in pen). A few of the symbols are easily identified (see the "Key" I have provided, Figure 2). They include the traditional symbols for the sun, the moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Saturn. There is a certain symmetry to the symbols, as Schneider points out, insofar as a planetary symbol appears over each occurrence of

95. See G. Stuhlfauth, Das Dreieck: Die Geschichte eines religiösen Symbols (Stuttgart, 1937), Abbildung 16. In 1939 it was reprinted by Friedrich Häussermann in his "Das 'göttliche Dreieck' und seine Bedeutung für die Philosophie Hegels," Zentrallblatt für Psychotherapie 11 (1939): 359-379. Häussermann's article is, in fact, a Jungian discussion of the triangle fragment.

"Spiritus."⁹⁶ Others are harder to identify. One appears to be an alternate, older, symbol for Mercury. Another might be Pisces. Some of the other symbols could possibly be chemical or alchemical. One appears to be a symbol for sulphur, another alum or potash, still another caput mortuum (see Chapter Five for my discussion of Hegel's use of this alchemical term). The other symbols, which include seven stars (some with five points, others with six) and two smaller triangles, are of very uncertain origin.⁹⁷

If this drawing is a copy of something in a book Hegel may have had access to, no one has yet succeeded in locating the original. The drawing does bear a striking resemblance to many alchemical or magical drawings in books which Hegel could have perused. For instance, as Helmut Schneider points out, many alchemical or magical diagrams were printed in more than one color of ink--typically black and red--and it could be that Hegel substituted pencil for the parts that he imagined would be printed in red.⁹⁸ In truth, although Hegel's diagram looks superficially like

96. H. Schneider, 58.

97. Helmut Schneider (*Ibid.*, 58) suggests one may be a symbol for caput mortuum, an alchemical term which Hegel sometimes uses and which I shall discuss in Chapter Five. I do not, however, understand to what Schneider is referring.

98. H. Schneider, 60. It could also be, as Schneider suggests, that this indicates that Hegel copied the diagram, substituting pencil for red. As I have said, however, no one has found the original and there are enough idiosyncracies in the drawing--for instance the triple "Spiritus" rather than the usual "Spiritus-Anima-Corpus"--to indicate that it represents Hegel's appropriation of some occult symbols for his own purposes.

many "Hermetic" illustrations, it is unusual in a number of respects, as I shall discuss shortly. I have printed several examples of genuine magical diagrams which contain elements similar to Hegel's as Figures 3-8 (one, Figure 3, also printed by Schneider, is from a work owned by Hegel).

So many questions surround this drawing that it is probably impossible to offer a neat interpretation which would explain all the symbols and the significance of the diagram as a whole. I do not believe that there is any sort of "secret code" present here. Some of the symbols may simply be Hegel's meaningless doodles. The drawing gives the impression of having been rapidly scrawled in the midst of a burst of creative activity, perhaps in a moment of intensely-felt intellectual inspiration. It is as if Hegel wished to capture in a single, graphic image some new thought. But what could that thought have been?

In 1810, Hegel began a correspondence with Karl Joseph Hieronymous Windischmann (1775-1839). In 1809, Windischmann had published a review of the Phenomenology of Spirit in the Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung.⁹⁹ Windischmann's review, which was positive, was one of the most significant to be published in Hegel's early career. Windischmann had studied philosophy and medicine at the Universities of Mainz, Würzburg, and Vienna. In 1797 he

99. K.J.H. Windischmann, Rezension, Phänomenologie des Geistes, Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung 31-34 (1809) columns 241-72.

began practicing medicine, but in 1803 was made a professor of Natural Philosophy at Aschaffenburg. Windischmann was a Freemason (a fact of some significance, to which I will return in the following chapter), and during the period of his correspondence with Hegel he was engaged in a study of magic. In 1813 he would publish Untersuchungen über Astrologie, Alchemie und Magie.¹⁰⁰ Windischmann wrote the following enigmatic lines to Hegel concerning his research into magic:

Everything rests on the fundamental thought that what is temporal, finite, in a state of becoming . . . is the eternal itself comprehended in its evolution, development, and self-knowledge, and that the impenetrable Spirit must of necessity individualize itself and take form in the infinity and infinite diversity of moments, which in themselves can nonetheless be most sharply grasped. In this way equally numerous forms of one-sidedness and of incantation are possible and effective, each along the path of Spirit's development. All such forms must

100. In 1818 he was made professor of the History of Philosophy at Bonn. Windischmann was a Roman Catholic, and became increasingly orthodox as the years went on. This appears to have been partly the cause of a parting of the ways between Windischmann and Hegel (whose sentiments were decidedly anti-Catholic). The real break came in the 1820s when Hegel, lecturing on the Philosophy of World History, publicly accused Windischmann of having stolen his interpretation of Chinese philosophy. See Petry, Philosophy of Subjective Spirit, vol. 2, 573-575.

find their explication in this investigation, beginning with the first and full magical power of the Impenetrable--and of Nature surging forth everywhere--over man, proceeding through the isolation and interlocking of moments, and ending with the penetration, illumination, and complete magical power of Spirit itself, which dissipates all magical incantation and constitutes the clarity and freedom of life itself.¹⁰¹

Windischmann goes on to complain of the terrible mental state his investigations of magic have put him in. In his response to Windischmann (May 27, 1810), Hegel offers his sympathy: "I am very curious to have your work on magic in hand. I confess I would not dare tackle this dark side and mode of spiritual nature or natural spirit, and am all the happier that you will both illuminate it for us and take up many a neglected and scorned subject, restoring it to the honor it deserves."¹⁰²

It seems as if Hegel is saying here that he has never deliberately delved into the area of the occult or of esoteric philosophy. It may be, though, that he simply means that he would never take on the project of devoting an entire, systematic study to it, for Hegel goes on to suggest--in a passage I shall quote at length--that he has

101. Quoted in Butler, Hegel: The Letters, 559.

102. Butler, 561; Hoffmeister #158

at some point in the past undergone Windischmann's torments himself:

Consider yourself convinced that the frame of mind you depict to me is partly due to this present work of yours, to this descent into dark regions where nothing is revealed as fixed, definite, and certain . . .

Each onset of a new path breaks off again and ends in the indeterminable, losing itself, wresting us away from our purpose and direction. From my own experience I know this mood of the soul, or rather of reason, which arises when it has finally made its way with interest and hunches into a chaos of phenomena but, though inwardly certain of the goal, has not yet worked its way through them to clarity and to a detailed account of the whole. For a few years I suffered from this hypochondria to the point of exhaustion. Everybody probably has such a turning point in his life, the nocturnal point of the contraction of his essence in which he is forced through a narrow passage by which his confidence in himself and everyday life grows in strength and assurance . . . Continue onward with confidence. It is science [Wissenschaft] which has led you into this

labyrinth of the soul, and science alone is capable of leading you out again and healing you.¹⁰³

It seems likely, as others have suggested, that Hegel is drawing here from his own experience in the Berne-Frankfurt period.¹⁰⁴ As was mentioned earlier, Rosenkranz spoke of a "theosophical phase" in Hegel's development beginning in Frankfurt. It is likely that Rosenkranz uses "theosophical" to refer to occult or Hermetic philosophy, rather than "mere" mysticism, for Rosenkranz knew that in Berne Hegel became interested in Eckhart and Tauler. (In other words, by characterizing the Frankfurt period alone, and not the Berne-Frankfurt periods together, as Hegel's "theosophical stage" Rosenkranz implies that the "theosophy" in question was not the mysticism of Eckhart and Tauler.) My hypothesis is that the triangle diagram represents, to use Hegel's own words "a turning point," a "nocturnal point of the contraction of his essence." It represents Hegel's initial synthesis of theosophy--such as he was exposed to in his Swabian Heimat, as well as whatever else he encountered in Frankfurt--with the idealism of Kant and Fichte, which, as we have seen, he studied in earnest during the same period.¹⁰⁵ Helmut Schneider writes: "Hegel had connections [Beziehungen] to

103. Ibid., 561

104. See Butler, Hegel: The Letters, 560.

105. Helmut Schneider (p. 76) states that it is probably impossible to date the drawing with any certainty.

alchemy, gnosticism, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, and astrology. The drawing is perfectly locatable within this horizon [Horizont]."¹⁰⁶

The word Spiritus occurs three times in the midst of astrological and (possibly) alchemical symbols, on each of the sides of the central triangle. This could represent Hegel's realization that all reality--whether celestial (the planets) or terrestrial (the elements)--must be understood in terms of the development of Spirit.¹⁰⁷

Around the probable time of the "triangle fragment" Hegel begins using the term Geist to speak of the divine: "A more intelligible expression for the notion of God as the universal life [Allebens] is the term Love, but a deeper one is Spirit."¹⁰⁸ Nature is to be seen as an expression of the divine Idea, and mankind (Spirit) as the highest

106. Ibid., 73.

107. The term Spiritus is quite common in alchemical and magical diagrams. It is generally part of a triad: Spiritus, Anima (Soul), Corpus (Body). The fact that Hegel includes only Spiritus and writes it three times ("taking the place" of Anima and Corpus) could indicate that Spirit is being absolutized vis-à-vis Body (materiality: the four elements) and Soul (this is a possible reading of the Philosophy of Spirit, in which "soul" [Seele] appears at the lowest level, before Spirit proper; Sean Kelly [p. 38] notes that "soul" is the mediating, common term between Spirit and nature). In his Lectures on the History of Philosophy, in the exposition of Böhme's thought, Hegel refers to Böhme's "three kinds of powers or Spiritus in different Centris, but in one Corpore" (LHP III, 214; Werke 20, 116). However, the description which follows does not appear to shed any light on the diagram.

108. Rosenkranz paraphrases this line in his account. The line, as I have given it, appears as a direct quotation from the fragment in Haym's Hegel und seine Zeit (Berlin, 1857), 101.

expression of nature, and the consummation or completion of the divine. Spiritus is the "magic word" which evokes the "shape" of the Absolute, which allows us to comprehend the Absolute in its totality.

Hegel's early presentation of his system (ca. 1802-03) consisted of four parts: "Logic and Metaphysics," "Philosophy of Nature," "System of Ethical Life," and theory of the "Absolute Idea" (art, religion, and philosophy).¹⁰⁹ The later Hegel, of course collapsed the third and fourth parts into "Philosophy of Spirit," turning "System of Ethical Life" into "Objective Spirit." (The Triangle and the Square thus seem to vie with one another in the Jena period for the honor of being Hegel's central symbolic form.) If the diagram is from this period, the large triangle might possibly represent "Absolute Spirit," and the smaller triangles the other parts of the system.¹¹⁰

It is also possible that the four triangles represent the four elements. In his mature Philosophy of Nature (1819-1830), Hegel identifies the "Mineral Kingdom" with Earth, the "Plant Kingdom" with Water and the "Animal Kingdom" with Fire. Hegel suggests that Fire gives way to

109. Harris, Night Thoughts, xlix; see also Harris's Introduction to the System of Ethical Life, 6.

110. It is also possible that Hegel has in mind Baader's square (discussed earlier), and intends for the three triangles to represent fire, water, and earth, while the large one represents air (pneuma/Spiritus). However, there is no central point in this central "pneumatic" triangle, which one would think Hegel would include if he were drawing on Baader.

"etheriality" (das Aetherische) but never explicitly identifies man with Air, the fourth element. This is, of course, the obvious move to make, for air = pneuma = spiritus. Thus, in our diagram, the central triangle could represent man/air, and the other triangles non-living matter/earth, plants/water, animals/fire.

But why is the Spiritus triangle surrounded by astronomical and other symbols? This can be explained if we remember the connection Aristotle draws between pneuma and aether. In the Generation of Animals he writes, "Now it is true that the faculty of all kinds of soul seems to have a connection with a matter different from and more divine than the so-called elements . . . All have in their semen that which causes it to be productive. I mean what is called thermon. This is not the fire or any such [sublunary] force, but it is the pneuma included in the semen and the foam-like, and the natural principle in the pneuma [is] like the element in the stars" (736b29-737a1). The element in the stars is, of course, aether. Insofar as we humans are knowers (i.e., receivers of form), we contain something of this astral substance. (Plotinus takes the doctrine a step further, claiming that we possess an astral or aetherial body, which was to become a major tenet of the later Hermetic philosophy and of the contemporary "New Age.")

Thus, to follow out this chain of equivalences and connections, if man = spiritus = pneuma, and the pneuma or life-force of man contains aether, and aether is the substance of the heavenly bodies, then there is an identity between man and the heavenly bodies. Thus, Hegel blends Spiritus with the planets and stars. If Hegel is drawing on all of this, it is a way for him to state what I said earlier: that all reality--whether celestial or terrestrial is to be understood in terms of Spirit as its telos. (As I have already mentioned, and will discuss much more fully in Chapter Six, the Aether is an important concept for Hegel.)

But this is by no means the only possible interpretation of the diagram. If we take the central triangle as representing the Trinity, each point stands for a person of the Trinity: Father (divine Logos), Son (created Nature), and Holy Spirit. Spiritus is written on each side, perhaps, because the first two "moments" of the Trinity are comprehended by the third. The Father and the Son are aufgehoben in the Spirit. As this is not a temporal sequence but a logical one, Father and Son are always already within the whole that is Spirit. The sides of the triangle unite and, in fact, create the points, the "moments" of the divine whole. Father and Son are what they are through Spirit. Thus, the sides of the triangle are identified with Spiritus, which is both an individual point of the triangle and that which permeates and bonds

together the whole. (Here we see the fundamental inadequacy of pictorial expressions of speculative philosophy: what can only be understood through Reason is expressed in a mode suited to the Understanding, which is, quite literally, "two-dimensional" thinking.)

It is also, of course, possible that the central triangle represents Spirit alone, and the three smaller triangles, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If this is the case, a similar analysis applies: Hegel draws a large, central triangle of Spirit, pointing to the other three, to indicate how Spirit is not simply a moment of the Trinity, but the "final" moment that comprehends and binds together the Trinity itself. If, however, we take the central triangle to represent the Trinity, then perhaps the three smaller triangles represent the individual "sciences" of the Trinity: Logic, Philosophy of Nature, and Philosophy of Spirit.

I have suggested that the diagram represents a synthesis of theosophy with the Fichtean-Kantian idealism because the diagram, amidst much arcane "Hermetic" symbolism, seems to represent the absolutization of human Spirit or Ego. Recall Schelling's 1795 letter to Hegel, quoted in the last chapter: "For Spinoza the world, the object by itself in opposition to the subject, was everything. For me it is the self."¹¹¹ My suggestion is

111. Quoted in Butler, Hegel: The Letters, 32.

that Hegel's diagram represents a stage (or a step) in Hegel's thought parallel to Schelling's: the modification of the Spinozistic-Kabbalistic-pantheistic nature mysticism with an absolutization of Spirit or Ego as Ziel and Quelle of nature itself. (It is also possible, of course, that Hegel realized that this "synthesis" was in fact similar to the Böhmean-Oetingerite brand of theosophy.)

Earlier in this chapter I spoke of the historicity of Hegel's speculation, and stated that it could only have been accomplished after history itself was consummated, after human beings have recognized themselves as free and self-determining, not determined by an Absolute which stands opposed to humanity as an absolute other. If the composition of the triangle diagram represents Hegel's realization of the centrality of Spirit or Ego, then the diagram constitutes, in effect, a kind of marker point at the end of history.

It certainly seems plausible to suggest, then, that the diagram represents the inspiration that led Hegel to "convert" to a form of Schellingian idealism. What is significant here is that the conversion, contrary to what is usually maintained, appears not to have been the result of Hegel's moving in a straight line from Kant to Fichte and finally to Schelling, as the latest and most adequate exponent of idealism. Rather, the conversion was more likely effected through Hegel's realization that

Schelling's Identity philosophy represented a revision of the Kantian-Fichtean philosophy in accord with the "deep truth" revealed through Proclus, Eckhart, Böhme, Oetinger and the alchemists.

7. Summary of the Argument Thus far

The present chapter has been largely "programmatic": laying out an account of how Hegel's overall project can be understood as a reappropriation of Hermetic ideals, themes, and symbols. In the next four chapters I will develop an interpretation of Hegel's mature philosophical writings and lectures in terms of my understanding of their debts to and affinity with the Hermetic tradition. I will continue to introduce sources which may have influenced Hegel, and continue to spell out in what way I regard his work as itself belonging to the Hermetic tradition. Before moving on to that account, a brief summary of the argument thus far seems a good idea.

Hegel's thought is not a part of the history of philosophy. It represents an altogether different standpoint, one that represents completed wisdom, not the search for wisdom.¹¹² Hegel is a wise man offering not Philosophie but Wissenschaft, scientia, episteme. He calls

112. Hegel writes in the Preface to the Phenomenology: "To help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science, to the goal where it can lay aside the title of 'love of knowing' and be actual knowledge--that is what I have set before me" (Miller, 3; PG, 6).

this science of wisdom "speculation" and opposes it to reflection (Reflexion). "Speculation" comes, as I said earlier, from speculum, mirror. Reflection is not the "mirroring" Hegel advocates, because it is a mere "duplication"--observation or phenomenological description, such as we find in Kant's *Transcendental Aesthetic* and *Analytic*, or, later, in Husserl's phenomenology. Speculation's speculum does not merely reflect the surface appearance of the individual, it is, instead a "magic mirror," reflecting the deepest essence of Spirit.¹¹³

113. In this context, consider the following use of the mirror metaphor from an ancient Syrian alchemical text: "The purpose of the mirror was not to allow a person to contemplate himself physically, because scarcely was the mirror put down, when the person lost memory of his own image. The Mirror represents the Divine Spirit. When the soul sees itself in it, it observes the shameful things in itself and rejects them. . . . Once purified, it imitates and takes as model the Holy Spirit; it becomes spirit itself; calm possesses it and it turns continuously to this superior state in which it knows [the divine] and is known [by it]. Then having become without shadow, it divests itself of the chains that are its own and those it has in common with the body. And what is the word of the philosophers? Know thyself. With these words is conveyed the spiritual and intellectual mirror. And what is this mirror if not the primordial spirit itself? When a man looks into it and sees himself, he turns away from everything bearing the names of gods or demons, and uniting with the Divine Spirit, he becomes a perfect man He sees the God that is in him. . . . This mirror is situated over seven doors . . . corresponding to the seven heavens . . . And over them rises the Eye of the invisible senses, the Eye of the Spirit, which is present and in all places. This perfect Spirit is seen as the power of which everything is composed." Quoted in Evola, The Hermetic Tradition, 62-63. Recall in this connection Corpus Hermeticum IV: "All those who heeded the proclamation and immersed themselves in mind [nous] participated in knowledge and became perfect [or "complete," teleioi] people because they received mind. But those who missed the point of the proclamation are people of reason [or

According to Kabbalistic tradition, Moses alone among prophets or wise men "gazed through a speculum that shines."¹¹⁴ Hegel in the Encyclopedia Logic states that "the term 'reflection' is primarily used of light, when, propagated rectilinearly, it strikes a mirrored surface and is thrown back by it" (EL § 112, Z; Geraets, 176). Reflection or understanding, because it thinks from within a straitjacket of false dichotomies, receives back from its contemplation only what it has put into it: its "rays of thought" are merely reflected back to it. By contrast, dialectical thinking involves nothing projected from the thinker: instead, it allows the medium within which the thinker thinks to itself "shine forth" truth (see Figure 10). Hegel is the modern Moses receiving the new Word and Covenant of God, not on Sinai but on the Golgotha of Absolute Spirit, not at the beginning of history but at its end.¹¹⁵

"speech," log<ik>on] because they did not receive <the gift of> mind as well and do not know the purpose or the agents of their coming to be.

114. See Elliot R. Wolfson, Through a Speculum that Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 147.

115. Kojève remarks that "The Wise Man . . . entrusts himself without reserve to Being and opens himself entirely to the Real without resisting it. His role is that of a perfectly flat and indefinitely extended mirror: he does not reflect on the Real; it is the Real that reflects on him, is reflected in his consciousness, and is revealed in its own dialectical structure by the discourse of the Wise Man who describes it without deforming it." Alexandre Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 176.

Like Moses (according to legend), Hegel is the recipient of Kabbalistic wisdom, only it is a Christian Kabbalah, and it is received not directly from God but from Böhme, Oetinger, and the tradition of speculative pietism. Hegel's "Kabbalah" is a revelation of eternal truth through the self-unfolding of Absolute Knowledge, the self-grounding display of an organic thought-form which is itself the actualization of God in the world. This revelation of God is at the same time the complete speech of the Whole, of all that is. It is a reconciliation of faith and scientific knowledge, without following the Kantian route of limiting knowledge to make room for faith. Hegel's system, furthermore, represents the overcoming of the distinction between "wise" and "vulgar," and the achievement of the classical philosophical ideal of self-knowledge.¹¹⁶

Hegel's science further distinguishes itself from philosophy by containing nothing that could conventionally be called "proof" or argumentation. It is a self-grounding speech. It is, furthermore, a realization of Oetinger's

116. The "wise-vulgar" distinction is overcome in Hegel, but certainly not in the sense that his philosophy is fully intelligible to everyone. In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion (I, 180; VPR, 88), Hegel states that "Religion is for everyone. It is not philosophy, which is not for everyone." He overcomes the distinction primarily by showing that the content of philosophy is identical to that of religion, which is accessible to the common man. Also, Hegel's philosophy provides an intellectual framework which can be taught to everyone to a certain degree (as Hegel thought he had proved at the Gymnasium in Nuremberg).

quest for a "third" form of thought, cutting a middle course between a purely figurative or imaginative approach to the divine and a purely "abstract" one. Hegel's new form of thought resolves the quarrel between philosophy and mytho-poetic thought. Hegel adopts the Hermetic ideal of a perennial philosophy, treating his dialectic, the "method" of speculation, as a "recollection" of the inchoate wisdom of mankind which has been expressed in art, religion, mythology, and philosophy in imperfect form.

The real power behind dialectic, the power which makes recollection possible, is imagination. Hegel recognizes perennial symbolic forms (recall the Phenomenology; Miller 29), and draws them, in effect, from what Oetinger called sensus communis.¹¹⁷ His use of them in the architectonic of his system is strikingly similar to the Hermetic "memory magic" of Bruno and others (in particular, as we shall see in Chapter Five, that of Ramon Lull). Hegel also engages in a form of analogical reasoning suspiciously like the Hermetic "science of correspondences." Recall his attempt to map the forms of the terrestrial world onto the four elements, as well as, most strikingly, the ubiquitous Trinitarian structure. Recall that Oetinger opposed his

117. The truth which speculation finds within poetry (or myth) and rational (philosophical) thought, and which it takes up and preserves, is none other than the perennial philosophy. Hegel held that the philosopher is not sufficient unto himself. Like Socrates in the *Crito*, he held that the people and its *nomoi* give birth to the philosopher.

science of "emblematics" (another variation on the ars memoria) to the modern geometrical, quantitative method. In Hegel we find the two, as might be expected, synthesized: the symbolic forms, the "emblems" that animate speculation are themselves "quantitative" (or "quantifiable") forms. A numerology pervades Hegel's system, in particular a fascination with Proclean triads.

Hegel conceives the whole articulated through dialectic exactly along the lines of Oetinger's intensum. Recall that an intensum is an organic whole which cannot be divided into pieces, but only articulated into inseparable, noetic "moments." Principle among the moments articulated in Hegel's science is a triad equivalent to the Christian Trinity. Exactly as Böhme and some versions of Kabbalism do, Hegel conceives the first moment, the Christian "Father," as God "in-Himself," in potentia. God is the eternal Logos; hence, Logic. Exactly as do Eckhart, Böhme, and Goethe, Hegel conceives the second moment, the "Son," as Nature. Through the third moment, Spirit, God achieves full actuality as the "concrete universal," the Hegelian analogue to Oetinger's Geistlichkeit. Spirit is the most adequate "embodiment" of God.

As I have shown, Hegel employs the language of "magic" to describe his system. Recall the fragment quoted by Rosenkranz in which Hegel bids us to learn "to speak the

magic words" which evoke the "shape" of the Absolute.¹¹⁸ Further, in a passage also quoted earlier, Hegel writes in the Phenomenology "Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being" (Miller, 32). And Hegel's remarks about "real" magic often express a respectful, if cautious, curiosity. I have already quoted Hegel's letter to Windischmann, in which he writes "I am very curious to have your work on magic in hand," and expresses his hope that Windishmann will restore his subject "to the honor it deserves." I will discuss Hegel's interest in magic and the paranormal in Chapter Six.

Hegel's attitude toward alchemy is similar. Also in Chapter Six, I will deal in detail with Hegel's indebtedness to alchemy. For now, I will simply mention that in Hegel's Naturphilosophie lectures of 1803 he connects the division "metals-combustibles-neutrals-earths" with Paracelsus's distinction "mercury-sulphur-salt."¹¹⁹ Earlier I noted how in his early philosophy of nature, Hegel reverently refers to Paracelsus and Böhme as "the Elders." And, to repeat, even where Hegel is drawing from more recent sources he insists, as Harris puts it, "on

118. Rosenkranz, Hegels Leben, 141.

119. See Harris, Night Thoughts, 274; G.W.F. Hegel, Gesammelte Werke, ed. der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), Vol. 6, 114, 4-17

finding an earlier pedigree . . . in Paracelsus and Böhme."¹²⁰ Harris speaks of Hegel's "evident desire to show that the older alchemical tradition of Paracelsus (and probably Böhme himself) contained symbolic expressions of important speculative truths."¹²¹

In the Introduction I briefly mentioned one aspect of Hermeticism which, so far, I have not discussed extensively: initiation. If Hegel believed that the reception of the system of Science could be accomplished simply by reading about it in a book, he would not have first written the Phenomenology of Spirit. As I said of Hermetic initiation in the Introduction, one must be led up to illumination carefully; one must actually explore the blind alleys that promise illumination but do not deliver, and one must be purified of false presuppositions. Only in this way will the true doctrine mean anything; only in this way will the initiate's life actually change. As I have said, Hegel's system is not simply a "theory" about the world; it is meant to transfigure our experience and effect a new way of being in the world. The Phenomenology of Spirit is Hegel's initiatory experience. It is Hegel's Eleusis, it is his Bacchanalian revel.

120. Harris, Night Thoughts, 278.

121. Ibid., 399.

PART II
MAGNUM OPUS

CHAPTER FOUR:

HEGEL'S INITIATION RITE: THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRIT

" . . . for it is an extremely tortuous way, to abandon what one is used to and possesses now, and to retrace one's steps towards the old primordial things."

--Corpus Hermeticum, iv. 9

1. Initiation

J.N. Findlay writes of the Phenomenology of Spirit, "The age, the social and cultural group that could read the Phenomenology with ease and pleasure has now passed utterly away: to fill in its gaps, to puzzle out its allusions and follow out its hints, involves for us an agonizing effort, a major archaeological and philosophical reconstruction."¹ This chapter is an archaeological dig of the kind Findlay calls for. In this section and the next, I shall merely survey the site and gently loosen up the soil, concerned only with taking in what is more or less on the surface. In the last two sections, however, I shall dig down deep through centuries of cultural sediment, down, in fact, to the forgotten relics of an age of heroes.

In the Summer of 1804, Hegel radically altered the structure of his system: he shortened it from four major divisions to three. Originally it had consisted of "Logic

1. See Findlay, Hegel: A Re-Examination (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 83.

and Metaphysics," "Philosophy of Nature," "System of Ethical Life," and "Absolute Spirit." As I discussed in the last chapter, the new tripartite structure combined the last two divisions into a "Philosophy of Spirit," with "System of Ethical Life" becoming "Objective Spirit." However, in the lectures of Winter 1806 Hegel reintroduced a fourth division: a "Phenomenology of Spirit." At the time, Hegel was writing his book of the same name, which he would publish the following year. The "Phenomenology of Spirit" was conceived as an introduction or propaedeutic to the tripartite system of Logic-Nature-Spirit. "Phenomenology of Spirit" is actually the subtitle of the published work; its full title is System of Science, First Part, The Phenomenology of Spirit.

The first question that must be answered about the Phenomenology is: Is it really a necessary part of the system, or merely something "tacked on"? Why bother with this introduction to "Science"? In the Preface to the Phenomenology Hegel writes: "Now, because the system of the experience of Spirit embraces only the appearance of Spirit, the advance from this system to the Science of the True in its true shape seems to be merely negative, and one might wish to be spared the negative as something false, and demand to be led to the truth without more ado. Why bother with the false?" (Miller, 22; PG, 29).

Hegel's Absolute, unlike Schelling's, cannot be expressed in a simple formula (e.g., "the indifference point," or "the coincidence of opposites"). According to Hegel, to grasp the Absolute we must go through the Science, go through every moment of the Absolute, and re-make it for ourselves. Furthermore, a preparatory exercise is necessary before we can reach this point. A few lines down from the passage just quoted, Hegel writes "truth is not a minted coin that can be given and pocketed ready-made" (Miller, 22; PG, 29).² Hegel believed that the consummation of the love of wisdom in Absolute Knowing was not equally possible in every historical epoch. Instead, he held that his achievement was possible only at a particular point in history, the end of history, when the philosophical, cultural and religious achievements of the ages were spread out before his gaze, when the accumulated substance of history was converted to an account on which he could draw. Further, he could not have acquired Wisdom without the consciousness of this ground. Thus, it is not enough to stand with Hegel in the modern period--at the "end of history"--and read his books: one must work through the system in full consciousness of what has made it possible, and one must overcome all false or partial standpoints which would make assimilation of the system

2. This is an allusion to Lessing's Nathan the Wise, IV, 6.

impossible. The Phenomenology is itself an archaeological dig.

If the Phenomenology is intended in part to acquaint readers with the intellectual and cultural strata on which the system stands, then is it a work of history? In a way, yes. In the final paragraph of the Phenomenology, Hegel writes that the totality of the forms of Spirit "regarded from the side of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; but regarded from the side of their [intellectually] comprehended organization, it is the Science of Knowing in the sphere of appearance . . . "

(Miller, 493; PG, 531). The Phenomenology of Spirit displays the forms in which Spirit has appeared in time. We may think of each as a "mode" of consciousness or mind. Each is a different way in which the world was, and still can be regarded or approached.³ Further, Hegel shows how each "mode" is at root a kind of striving after what he calls at the end of the book "Absolute Knowing."⁴

However, as has often puzzled readers, Hegel frequently does not present this historical material in chronological order. The reason for this is that Phenomenology stands in the same relation to history as the

3. Hegel writes that, "in the child's progress through school, we shall recognize the history of the cultural development of the world traced, as it were, in a silhouette" (Miller, 16; PG, 22).

4. Hegel writes in the Preface "It is this coming-to-be of Science as such or of knowledge that is described in the Phenomenology of Spirit" (Miller, 15; PG, 21).

Philosophy of Nature stands to nature. The Philosophy of Nature is an account of the fundamental moments, the eidetic divisions, which nature exhibits to scientific consciousness. It is not a history of nature, in the sense that Hegel thought that natural beings appeared in the order of his chapter headings and divisions. (Notoriously, Hegel rejected biological evolution.) Similarly, the object of the Phenomenology is not to present a history of mind, but a "natural history" of its fundamental forms in their logical relationship.

What is the difference, then, between the Phenomenology of Spirit and the Philosophy of Spirit? After all, as is often pointed out by confused readers, Hegel covers much the same ground again in the Philosophy of Spirit (which even includes a section titled "Phenomenology"). This is true, but the context and purpose of the Philosophy of Spirit are completely different from those of the Phenomenology. As I have said, the Phenomenology of Spirit shows that all forms of consciousness or mind aim at Absolute Knowing. This includes cultural or social forms in which mind "embodies" itself, such as natural science, art, and religion. However, none of these forms actually achieves Absolute Knowing. Hegel's purpose in the Phenomenology is to give his readers a total theory of psychology, science, society, culture, and history in terms of their telos, Absolute

Knowing. The Phenomenology is an Aristotelian Science, understanding all of its objects in terms of their "striving" after the knowledge of God.⁵

The Phenomenology merely describes Absolute Knowing; it does not achieve Absolute Knowing itself. This is the task primarily of the Logic, for in working out the categories of the Logic the self-reflection of Idea is realized. The categories of the Logic are never explicitly discussed in the Phenomenology, but they are there beneath the surface. In fact, as we shall see, the Logic is simply the recollection of the categorial structures underlying Spirit. The Logic is the unconscious in-itself of Spirit become for-itself.

In the Philosophy of Nature we understand nature as an "other" to Idea, striving to express Idea. The Philosophy of Spirit repeats much of the ground of the Phenomenology,

5. Hegel wrote the following advertisement "blurb" for the publishers of the Phenomenology: "It includes the various shapes of Spirit within itself as stages in the progress through which Spirit becomes pure knowledge or Absolute Spirit. Thus, the main divisions of this science, which fall into further subdivisions, include a consideration of Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, observational and active Reason, as well as Spirit itself,--in its ethical, cultural and moral, and finally in its religious forms. The apparent chaos of the wealth of appearances in which Spirit presents itself when first considered, is brought into a scientific order, which is exhibited in its necessity, in which the imperfect appearances resolve themselves and pass over into the higher ones constituting their proximate truth. They find their final truth first in religion and then in Science, as the result of the whole." Intelligenzblatt der Jenaischen Allgemeinen Literaturzeitung, October 28, 1807. Quoted in Petry, Philosophy of Spirit I, lxvii.

this time in the full context of an understanding of Idea and its imperfect embodiment in nature. Spirit must be covered again, for once we have glimpsed Idea, and understood the antecedents of Spirit in nature, our understanding of Spirit will of necessity be transformed.⁶

However, the Phenomenology does not just inform Hegel's readers about the history of mind. It also shows why every standpoint other than Absolute Knowing is partial or false and must be abandoned. The Phenomenology is the tool by which Hegel puts his readers in the "frame of mind" necessary to work through the pure determinations of the Idea in-itself. This is not the purpose of the Philosophy of Spirit. But why work through the Phenomenology and the rest of the system? Why achieve Absolute Knowing? In effect, I answered this question in the preceding chapter when I said that Hegelian philosophy will constitute a perfected form of living in the world; in the words of H.S. Harris, "an actual experience of living in the light of the eternal day."⁷ This is the attraction. All philosophy, including Hegel's, presupposes that at least some men yearn

6. In the Preface to the Phenomenology Hegel writes that, "an exposition of this kind constitutes the first part of Science, because the existence of spirit qua primary is nothing but the immediate or the beginning--but not yet its return into itself. The element of immediate existence is therefore what distinguishes this part of Science from the others" (Miller, 20; PG, 27-28). Hegel means that the Phenomenology is concerned with our own experience, Spirit as we know it.

7. H.S. Harris, Hegel's Development Vol. II: Night Thoughts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 199.

to know themselves and the world fully.⁸ As Alexandre Kojève notes, for Hegel the wise man is, first and foremost, the man of full self-consciousness, for total self-consciousness involves a knowledge of one's historical, cultural, political, biological, and cosmological situation.⁹

Just as the magicians of old--men such as Agrippa and Bruno--believed that knowledge of the right incantations could give one tremendous power, so Hegel believes that knowledge of the "magic words" that evoke the Absolute can empower the individual by making him self-confident and by reconciling him with the world. The man of full Selbstbewusstsein (self-consciousness) is selbstbewusst (confident, self-assured). In fact, Kojève defines the Hegelian wise man as the man of both perfect self-consciousness and perfect self-satisfaction.¹⁰ Wisdom and self-satisfaction do not consist, however, in ego-aggrandizement, but in the transcendence of ego and identification with Spirit as such. Kojève writes: "For Self-consciousness to exist, for philosophy to exist, there

8. "Hegelian Wisdom is a necessary ideal only for a definite type of human being, namely, for the man who puts the supreme value in Self-consciousness; and only this man can realize this ideal. . . . In other words: the Platonic-Hegelian ideal of Wisdom is valid only for the Philosopher." Alexandre Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 84.

9. Ibid., 75-76.

10. Ibid., 76-77. His third definition is that the wise man is the "morally perfect man" (Ibid., 78).

must be transcendence of self with respect to self as given."¹¹ H.S. Harris notes that, "In [Hegel's] view we have to annihilate our own selfhood in order to enter the sphere where Philosophy herself speaks."¹² Here again we see a clear affinity with mysticism.

If it is the task of the Phenomenology to achieve this transcendence of the self, then the Phenomenology begins to look like a mystical initiation. It is a work which "purifies" the reader for the reception of Divine Wisdom. John Burbidge writes that the Phenomenology, "with its lengthy and arduous process of initiation, came at a time when Hegel was frequenting the company of known Masons, some of them graduates of the banned Illuminati."¹³ Certainly Hegel's interest in mystical initiation was long-standing, as his poem "Eleusis" illustrates (see Chapter Two). K.J.H. Windischmann, a Mason discussed in the last chapter, took the Phenomenology of Spirit as a Masonic manifesto in the tradition of Lessing. He refers to this elliptically in an 1810 letter to Hegel: "The study of your system of Science has convinced me that this work will some day, when the time of understanding arrives, become the primer [Elementarbuch] of the liberation of mankind, as foretold by Lessing. You understand, of course, what I am

11. Ibid., 39.

12. Harris, Night Thoughts, 51.

13. See Burbidge's Introduction to his translation of D'Hondt's Hegel en son temps: Hegel In His Time (Lewiston, NY: Broadview Press, 1988), xi.

trying to say, and you also recognize what this work is to me (not merely as writing [Schrift], but as work [Werk] . . .¹⁴ As I shall discuss in the final chapter, Hegel's philosophy is anything but utopianism, or political radicalism. Nevertheless, it is significant that a Mason--on the basis of a few cues--could so easily take the Phenomenology as a Masonic document.¹⁵

Traditionally, Hermes, the guide of souls, presided over the initiation rites of the mystery religions.¹⁶ Garth Fowden writes of the Hermetic initiation that, "it is not envisaged as a form or symbol, or something that one just reads about, but as a real experience, stretching all the capacities of those who embark upon it: 'for it is an extremely tortuous way, to abandon what one is used to and possesses now, and to retrace one's steps towards the old primordial things.'"¹⁷ (Anyone who has ever attempted to read the Phenomenology knows how it can stretch all of one's capacities and be a "tortuous way," indeed, a highway of despair!)

Fowden writes in the same context that "the [Hermetic] initiation falls into two phases, the former emphasizing

14. April 27, 1810; Hoffmeister #155.

15. See Jacques D'Hondt, Hegel Secret (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), 299-300.

16. Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 73.

17. Garth Fowden, The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 106. Fowden is quoting Corpus Hermeticum iv. 9.

self-knowledge, the latter knowledge of God."¹⁸ Again, there is an interesting parallel to Hegelian philosophy. The Phenomenology can be thought of as a voyage of self-discovery, whereas the rest of the system (which is also a tortuous way) is a discovery of the Absolute or God. Of course, as I have already indicated, the entire Hegelian philosophy is both a knowledge of the Whole and of the self. In a discussion of Oriental mysteries that is applicable to the Hermetic tradition, Joseph Campbell writes: "In the sacred books of the Orient, the ultimate mystery of being is said to be transcendent, in the sense that it 'transcends'. . . human knowledge, thought, sight, and speech. However, since it is explicitly identified with the mystery of our own being, and of all being whatsoever, it is declared to be immanent as well: in fact, that is the main point of most Oriental, as well as of most pagan, primitive, and mystical initiations."¹⁹

Aside from his poem "Eleusis," Hegel's most famous reference to the initiatory mysteries of Greece is in the Preface to the Phenomenology: "Appearance is the arising and passing away which itself does not arise or pass away, but is in-itself [an sich], and constitutes the actuality and movement of the life of truth. The True is thus the Bacchanalian revel [bacchantische Taumel] in which no

18. Ibid., 106.

19. Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God Vol. III: Occidental Mythology (New York: Penguin Books, 1964), 109.

member is not drunk; yet because each member collapses as soon as he drops out, the revel is just as much transparent and simple repose" (Miller, 27; PG, 35).²⁰ Here Hegel is comparing the play of partial standpoints in the Phenomenology to the Eleusinian initiatory rites, particularly the Dionysian mysteries.²¹

Another allusion to the Dionysian mysteries in the Preface appears in Hegel's discussion of the essential moment of negativity in the path to Absolute Knowing: "But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself" (Miller, 19; PG, 26). Like the Egyptian Osiris, Dionysius was, of course, torn to pieces and then resurrected. A few lines later occurs the well-known passage about "tarrying with the negative," which is "the magical power" which Spirit uses to "convert" the negative

20. Hegel's interest in the Greek mysteries was very probably awakened by Hölderlin. See Hölderlin's poem "Bread and Wine."

21. Hegel himself was certainly a "worshipper" of Dionysius. His letters record the fact that he was constantly ordering large shipments of wine for the household. In an 1821 letter to Goethe, Hegel speaks of Dionysius, and of wine as having "already lent mighty assistance to natural philosophy, which is concerned to demonstrate spirit in nature and which thus finds in wine the most immediate and impressive testimony on behalf of its own teaching . . ." Butler, 701; 702-703. Hoffmeister ## 393, 30, 35, 36, 36a, 43a, 67a.

"into being." Further references to the mysteries elsewhere in the Phenomenology will be treated later.

Before discussing the Hermetic elements of the Phenomenology further, I must offer a brief description of some of the main ideas and divisions of the book. Of all of Hegel's texts, the Phenomenology is the one most familiar to readers. Therefore, I will only be concerned with parts of the text which are crucial for my interpretation of Hegel's philosophy as a whole, and my argument about specific Hermetic influences. Such a precis is necessary if my account of the Phenomenology's Hermetic elements is to be at all intelligible.

2. At the Revels

"The soul cannot bear to have anything above it. I believe that it cannot bear to have even God above it. If he is not in the soul, and the soul is not as good as he, it can never be at ease."

--Meister Eckhart²²

The soil we are sifting in our "archaeological dig" has now revealed itself as sacred ground. The rites of Hegelian philosophy are not, of course, entirely the same as those of Eleusis. The Hegelian mysteries are a peculiar

22. Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation by Raymond Bernard Blakney (New York: Harper, 1944), 163.

amalgamation of those of Dionysius and those of Pythagoras. Pythagoras distinguished his students into two groups: akousmatikoi and mathematikoi. In the rites of the Phenomenology we are all akousmatikoi, hearing the voice of the meta-muse of history and culture. In the Logic we graduate to the status of mathematikoi, working through the pure moments of the Idea. Following the Preface (which I shall discuss in section three) and Introduction, the actual body of the Phenomenology has a curious structure. It is not only divided into numbered chapters (eight of them), but into major divisions, designated by letters. These begin normally: "A" is "Consciousness" (Bewusstsein); "B" is "Self-consciousness" (Selbstbewusstsein). But C is followed on the same line by "AA" and the term "Reason," as follows: "C. (AA.) Reason" (C. (AA.) Vernunft). No "D" follows. Instead, on the following lines, we have "(BB.) Spirit," "(CC.) Religion," and "(DD.) Absolute Knowing" (absolute Wissen). Commentators have suggested various explanations for this. J.N. Findlay suggests that "The numbering of the sections seems to mean that Hegel regarded all the parts of the work after the part entitled 'Self-Consciousness' . . . as constituting the single third member of the main triad of his work."²³ This is a

23. Findlay, 116. Later, Findlay seems to want to hold that "C" is "Reason" and that AA through DD are the subdivisions of "Reason." But Hegel clearly makes Reason AA (again: C. (AA.) Vernunft), and thus itself a division of C along with Spirit, Religion and Absolute Knowing (BB, CC, and DD). "C" is not given a name. See Findlay, 255-

reasonable hypothesis. A, B and C do form a dialectical triad for, as we shall see, C and all of its moments are a return to A, "Consciousness," in which all the later phases of the dialectic are prefigured. I will return to the issue of the organization of the Phenomenology later.

In "Consciousness," division A, the first standpoint we encounter on the way to Absolute Knowing is "Sense-Certainty" (sinnliche Gewissheit). It is vitally important to understand what is at stake in Sense-Certainty, for, as we know, the dialectic is a circle; the end returns to the beginning. Thus we can expect that in some sense what is aimed at or desired in Sense-Certainty is achieved in Absolute Knowing.

At the root of Sense-Certainty--as well as all the forms of Spirit--is a primal, demonic drive for complete possession or mastery of the object, for, in effect, the annihilation of otherness. By implication, this drive is simultaneously a will to remove the divide between subject and object, for by cancelling "otherness" it seeks to exalt

256. In the later Philosophy of Spirit, Hegel includes the subdivision "Phenomenology" and divides it into Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, and Reason. This is probably what moved Findlay to identify "C" in the Phenomenology with "Reason." However, "Reason" in the Philosophy of Spirit does not subsume what are called in the Phenomenology "Spirit," "Religion," and "Absolute Knowing." These are covered outside the "Phenomenology" subdivision of the Philosophy of Spirit, as "Objective Spirit" and "Absolute Spirit." "Reason" in the Philosophy of Spirit is simply what is discussed as "AA" in the Phenomenology. Thus, it is not reasonable to conclude, from the structure of the Philosophy of Spirit, that "C" in the Phenomenology is "Reason."

the self (this implication will become crucial for understanding the section on "Self-Consciousness"). In discussing this "primal drive" to annul otherness--which is exhibited at all levels of Spirit--Hegel speaks again of the Eleusinian mysteries:

we can tell those who assert the truth and certainty of the reality of sense-objects that they should go back to the most elementary school of wisdom, viz. the ancient Eleusinian mysteries of Ceres and Bacchus, and that they have still to learn the secret meaning of the eating of bread and the drinking of wine. For he who is initiated into these Mysteries not only comes to doubt the being of sensuous things, but to despair of it; in part he brings about the nothingness of such things himself in his dealings with them, and in part he sees them reduce themselves to nothingness. Even the animals are not shut out from this wisdom but, on the contrary, show themselves to be most profoundly initiated into it; for they do not just stand idly by in front of sensuous things as if these possessed intrinsic being, but, despairing of their reality, and completely assured of their nothingness, they fall to without ceremony and eat them up. And all Nature, like the animals, celebrates these open Mysteries

which teach the truth about sensuous things [Miller, 65; PG, 77].

When Hegel writes that the initiate "comes to doubt the being of sensuous things" he does not mean what modern philosophers mean when they speak of doubting the "external world." A world of sensible objects really is "out there," but, metaphysically speaking, it is made insubstantial by the activity of the subject. The aggrandizement of the subject = the "withdrawal" of substance from the world and "into" the subject. The subject becomes substance--that which persists, the unmoving pivot around which the world of objects is set awirl as it is conquered and transformed according to the plans and desires of the subject. When Hegel says that the initiate "brings about" the nihilation of sensible things himself he is stating the principle of his Idealism: it is the vocation of mankind, or Spirit, to transform the given world, to make it conform to Idea, to remove the distinction between real and ideal, subject and object.

"Transformation" in this context has a dual sense. On the one hand it is literal, noticeable change, whether of trees into dwellings, or of children into educated men. On the other, it is a transformation of the unknown into the known, the grasped. In both cases what is involved is the annihilation of the resistance of things, an annihilation

of their otherness, their hiddenness. The first sense of transformation is only an approximation to the true unity of subject and object, ideal and real--which is achieved only through the full development of the second kind of transformation: the total, thoughtful grasp of the Whole through a system of Science. For Hegel, it is not enough for Spirit to change the world; it must interpret it. As we shall see, it is ultimately through this urge to cancel or "master" otherness that the true individual, true substance, true self, and true God are simultaneously actualized.²⁴

Because this is a somewhat controversial reading of the nature of Spirit, I will offer a number of corroborating quotations. In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion of 1827, Hegel states:

Ideality means that this being [that is] external (i.e., its spatiality, temporality, materiality, and mutual externality) is sublated. Inasmuch as I know this being, its contents are not represented things,

24. Religion approaches but cannot realize this ideal. Hegel sees the Eleusinian ritual of bread and wine as functionally similar to the Christian Eucharist of bread and wine: both involve the "taking in" of divine substance, an identification of man and God (though the celebrants at Eleusis are not conscious of this, as Hegel discusses much later in the Phenomenology). Christians, of course, do not consider the Eucharist as making man God, but they do hold that it imbues man with the divine presense. The implications presented by the digestive process ("Man ist was er isst") suggest more interesting possibilities, however.

being outside one another; rather they are within me in a simple manner. Though a tree has many parts, it nevertheless is merely simple in my representation. Spirit is knowledge. For it to be knowledge, the content of what it knows must have attained this ideal form, it must have been negated in this manner. What constitutes Spirit must have come into its own in such a way. Spirit must have been educated, must have traversed this circuit. These forms, distinctions, determinations, and finitudes must have been, in order for it to make them its own and to negate them, in order for what it is in itself to have emerged out of it and stood as object over against it, yet at the same time be its own [LPR I, 184; VPR I, 92].

In the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel states that "In cognition what has to be done is all a matter of stripping away the alien character of the objective world that confronts us" (EL § 194 Z-1; Geraets, 273). In the Philosophy of Spirit Hegel writes: "All the activities of Spirit are nothing but the various modes in which that which is external is led back into the internality, to what is Spirit itself, and it is only by means of this leading back, this idealizing or assimilation of that which is external, that Spirit becomes and is Spirit" (PS § 381 Z; Petry I, 37). "All the activities of Spirit"--all modes of

consciousness-- Hegel says, are forms in which we strive to overcome otherness.²⁵ In the so-called "System of Ethical Life" of 1802/03, Hegel remarks that "The ideality of sensation, or its coming to be consciousness, has as its immediate goal that sensation shall become in consciousness something inwardly opposed that has its other-being, and hence precisely the object sensed, in itself, and the sensing shall become in itself a universal."²⁶

Further, freedom is only possible through overcoming otherness. "Freedom," Hegel states, "is only present where there is no other for me that is not myself" (EL § 24 Z-2; Geraets, 58). Elsewhere, he writes that "A freedom for which something is genuinely external and alien is no freedom at all; freedom's essence and its formal definition is that nothing is absolutely external."²⁷ As I have said, Spirit's triumph over the other is only fully actualized in Science. Hegel states that "the purpose of all true science is just this, that Spirit shall recognize itself in everything in heaven and on earth" (PS § 377 Z; Petry I, 5). In the Science of Logic, Hegel writes that "pure

25. "An out-and-out other simply does not exist for Spirit" (PS § 377 Z; Petry I, 5).

26. G.W.F. Hegel, System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit, trans. H.S. Harris and T.M. Knox (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), 218. I have altered the translation slightly. Hegel, System der Sittlichkeit, Zweiter Auflage, ed. G. Lasson (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1923), 283.

27. G.W.F. Hegel, Naturrecht, in Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 4, ed. Harmut Buchner and Otto Pöggler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), 446.

science presumes the liberation from the opposition of consciousness" (Miller, 49; WL I, 33). At the very end of the Philosophy of Nature, Hegel remarks that Spirit "wants to liberate itself by fashioning nature from within itself; this action of Spirit is called philosophy. . . . The aim of these lectures is to convey an image of nature, in order to subdue this Proteus: to find in this externality only the mirror of ourselves, to see in nature a free reflection of Spirit" (PN § 376 Z; Petry III, 213). "Spirit [when contemplating nature] has the certainty which Adam had when he beheld Eve, 'This is flesh of my flesh, this is bone of my bone" (PN § 247 Z; Petry I, 204).

The will to overcome otherness is seen in all of nature. Faced with the opposition of an external world, as Hegel has stated, the animal gobbles up the external.²⁸ The difference between man and animal, however, is that man can "master" nature and "absorb" the external without literally annihilating it. The dog can only eat its food, or chew up the offending slipper. It cannot make the world its own through thought. In his early Philosophy of Nature of 1805-06, Hegel writes "eating and drinking make

28. For a treatment similar to that of the Phenomenology, see the Philosophy of Spirit, 381 Z; Petry I, 33; also see Philosophy Of Nature, 357 Z; Petry III, 136: "The organism must . . . posit the subjectivity of externality, appropriate it, and identify it with its own self; this constitutes assimilation." And: Philosophy of Nature, 359 Z; Petry III, 144: "Animal appetite is the idealism of objectivity, whereby this objectivity loses its alien character."

inorganic things into what they are in themselves, in truth, it is the unconscious comprehending of them--they become thus sublated thereby, because they are in themselves [this fire essence]."²⁹ Eating and drinking annihilate sensible things and reduce them to their elements, to what they are "in-themselves." Thus, eating and drinking prefigure Science, the true "reduction" of things to their essence, which is their relationship to the Absolute.³⁰

"Sense-Certainty"--the initial division of the Phenomenology--is the most basic, primitive form in which the urge to cancel or master the other manifests itself in consciousness. Spirit in Sense-Certainty believes--tacitly--that the object in its real, concrete particularity can be adequately "grasped" through bare sensory experience alone. In short, Sense-Certainty believes that intuition can make the object fully present, fully transparent in its concreteness, and thus no longer "other."

29. Quoted in Harris, Night Thoughts, 448. Harris writes that animal nutrition is "the self-intro-reflection of the inorganic."

30. Also in the 1805-06 Philosophy of Nature, Hegel states that, "The animal organism creates its own internal environment . . . [The] animal organism feeds all its other functions--all the functions of its 'inner organism'--upon the energy produced by its nutritive system." (Quoted in Harris II, 448). Again, there is a close analogy here between the system of Science and the "internal environment" of the animal: Science comprehends ("digests") things by locating them in the system of Science, which is conceived by Hegel as an organic unity.

Sense-Certainty cannot achieve this aim because intuition cannot fully grasp or envelope its object. Sense-Certainty thinks it can grasp the particularity of the object as a "this," in its pure immediacy. But, Hegel writes, "An actual sense-certainty is not merely this pure immediacy, but an instance of it" (Miller, 59; PG, 70). In other words, the gesture or the "this" through which we think we can grasp and thus "master" the particularity of the object is really a universal, applicable not just to this "this" but to all "thisses." The universal is, according to Hegel, "the true content of sense-certainty" (Miller, 60; PG, 72).

Suppose we realize this, and make the move to considering the object as a congeries of universals. To use Hegel's example, the object is white, cubical, tart, etc. The point where the qualities intersect is the object itself.³¹ This is the move to what Hegel calls "Perception" (Wahrnehmung). But a similar problem appears here as well. As universals, those nameable properties which make up the thing are, of course, shared by others. We have indeed grasped the other in its particularity (where particularity involves a relation to the universal),

31. Hegel writes, "It is in truth, then, the thing itself that is white, and also cubical, also tart, and so on. In other words, the thing is the Also, or the universal medium in which the many properties subsist apart from one another, without touching or cancelling one another; and when so taken the thing is perceived as what is true" (Miller, 73; PG, 86).

but we now find that what we really wanted all along was to grasp the other in its individuality, in its uniqueness or singularity.³² (In other words, we wanted to have the other in its individuality--which is really the same thing as annihilating the other's individuality).

In the final form of "Consciousness," which Hegel treats in the section "Force and the Understanding" (Kraft und Verstand), thought begins to make its first true appearance. Perhaps, consciousness thinks, the individual can be grasped through a knowledge of the "forces" underlying it, which make it what it is. Here we have the first glimmerings of scientific consciousness: we will understand the thing as "bound" by "laws" to which it must adhere. If we can possess these laws, we become master of the thing (if only in thought). Thus, for example, we explain gravitational phenomena by postulating an occult force, "gravitation." But this tautological explanation explains nothing about the object. Once this is realized, consciousness is embarrassed to find that it has succeeded only in revealing something about itself.

We can now glimpse the end of the Hegelian philosophy already in its beginning. In Absolute Knowing the drive to totally grasp the object, and to annul the subject-object distinction, will be realized. Absolute Knowing will be

32. If we were now to pause in order to fully follow out the dialectic of universal, particular, and individual, we would understand the entire Phenomenology and system. But I shall stick to the text.

the total grasp of an individual in its uniqueness. In fact, it will be the total grasp of the only true, unique individual there is: the Absolute--again, the analog to Aristotelian ousia is very clear.³³ However, in Hegel's thought substance has become subject: "what seems to happen outside of [the self], to be an activity directed against it, is really its own doing, and Substance shows itself to be essentially Subject" (Miller, 21; PG, 28).³⁴ Knowledge of this individual is simultaneously self-knowledge. Otherness still exists, but it is now understood in terms of its place within the Whole, which is the Absolute = Substance = Subject. Substantive otherness, however, has passed away, because what is substantive has become subjective. In short, Absolute Knowing achieves exactly what is desired, covertly, by Sense-Certainty (and the other forms of Spirit).

Thus the realized Hegelian system returns to the beginning of the Phenomenology: Absolute Knowing is

33. The Absolute is the individual, which subsumes universals as its particular manifestations. See Richard Dien Winfield, "On Individuality," in his Freedom and Modernity (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

34. Elsewhere, Hegel writes: "Further, the living Substance is being which is in truth Subject, or, what is the same, is in truth actual only in so far as it is the movement of positing itself, or is the mediation of its self-othering with itself" (Miller, 10; PG, 14). Also: "That the true is actual only as system, or that Substance is essentially Subject, is expressed in the representation of the Absolute as Spirit--the most sublime Concept and the one which belongs to the modern age and its religion" (Miller, 14; PG, 18-19).

"Consciousness" transformed. Absolute Knowing will be a move beyond sense (as in "Force and the Understanding"), but it will not be concerned with the universal (contra "Perception") but rather with the individual (just as in primitive "Sense Certainty"). Nevertheless, Absolute Knowing will preserve the moment of concern with the universal, for the individual it ultimately grasps will sublate the universal. Finally, just as in "Force and the Understanding," we will find in the end that we have only succeeded in discovering something about ourselves, for, again, Substance = Subject.

When I first spoke about the primitive urge of consciousness to annul the other, I said that by implication this involved a will to eliminate the subject-object distinction. In effect, "Self-Consciousness" (section B) explores this implication. It shows that the will to nullify otherness is simultaneously a desire to absolutize the self. Confronting substantial objects standing opposed to it, the subject desires to cancel their substantiality and transfer this quality to itself. This can be seen as a process of individuation: the subject seeks to become an individual by cancelling the individuality of others--to "absolutize" the self at the expense of others. To "absolutize" the subject is the same thing as to "individuate" it, for in the terms of classical

metaphysics, which Hegel takes over, that which is absolute is truly individual.

In introducing "Self-Consciousness," Hegel uses the term "Desire" (Begierde) to describe this primal urge for the cancellation of otherness and the individuation-absolutization of subject.³⁵ He writes that "self-consciousness is Desire in general" (Miller, 105; PG, 121). Consciousness as Self-Consciousness has a dual object: the thing out there (given in perception) and itself, which is what it is only in opposition to the thing. Self-Consciousness, Hegel writes, "presents itself as the movement in which this opposition is removed, and the identity of [the self] with itself is established" (Ibid.; my italics).

But Spirit is not just this Desire to absolutize itself. There is a telos to Desire at which all human activities aim, from the base Desire to simply negate and destroy otherness because it is other, to the more sophisticated forms of "negating" otherness through transformation. This telos is self-consciousness (which is not just the subject of this one section, but a major topic

35. Kojève asks, what is Desire but the will to "transform the contemplated thing by an action, to overcome it in its being that is unrelated to mine and independent of me, to negate it in its independence, and to assimilate it to myself, to make it mine, to absorb it in and by my I?" (37-38).

of the entire work).³⁶ Hegel shows that when the subject transforms objects according to its will, or rages at and destroys that which resists its desires, it is really being moved by the desire to confront itself. The desire of the subject to annul the other and absolutize itself is just the same thing as the desire to be confronted by the self and no other. The nature of consciousness forces this state of affairs: consciousness is always a two-termed relationship requiring a subject and an object. Therefore, when the subject wishes to know itself, it must split itself into a subjective side, which knows, and an objective side, which is known. To know itself, consciousness must find a mirror. This means, however, that if the goal of consciousness is self-knowledge, it cannot achieve this by annihilating all objectivity, but only by making objectivity reflective, by transforming objects into a mirror of consciousness.

We cannot, though, fully or truly confront ourselves through malleable objects. Just insofar as we desire to put our stamp on all that is, to create a world for ourselves, we desire total self-reflection. The transformed object becomes an extension of myself, and thus no longer truly "other." But although it becomes a "part" of me it is not "like" me; it is not a being like myself.

36. Hegel, like Böhme, regards self-knowledge not simply as what ought to be achieved, but rather as what all men (and reality itself) are directed toward by a primal will.

The object becomes situated in my world, but it has no world of its own. Consciousness thus will not be satisfied until it has seen its own nature in another being, and that other being has recognized it. In short, this drive for self-consciousness can only be satisfied by a being like the subject. But the subject does not just want to contemplate this other subject, as I have said it must be affirmed by it as well. The subject can only be assured that it confronts another being like itself if the other being recognizes it as a being like itself (Miller, 110; PG, 127).³⁷ Thus, in one fell swoop subject will satisfy the desire for self-reflection and individuation: the recognition of the other subject will affirm it in its identity; give it self-understanding as a being of a determinate sort.

But problems lie ahead. The first attempt to achieve this recognition is thoroughly self-defeating. The subjects relate to one another through force, seeking to compel recognition. One vanquishes the other and becomes Master (Herr); the vanquished subject is Slave (Knecht). In this "struggle unto death," both reveal their own utter lack of self-consciousness. Subject is confronted with a being like itself, but treats this other subject as if it

37. H.S. Harris writes: "Only through seeing myself in another can I see what I am." H.S. Harris, editorial remark in G.W.F. Hegel, The Jena System, 1804-5: Logic and Metaphysics (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 31.

were an object. Paradoxically, it seems to follow from this that in order to overcome this will to compel recognition and become truly recognized, one must first achieve self-consciousness. If the subject treats other subjects like itself as mere objects for manipulation, it is because it does not know its own nature. The desire for recognition arises out of the will to achieve self-consciousness and individuation, but now it appears that we have put the cart before the horse. Recognition is only possible among beings who already know who they are.

Kojève writes that, "Man can only be fully realized and revealed--that is, be definitely satisfied--only by realizing a universal recognition."³⁸ What this involves is the recognition, achieved through history, of the true nature of Spirit as such. We have seen that Hegelian Science will be the total grasp of an individual, a true substance, and that this substance becomes subject. This means that true self-consciousness is achieved in Absolute Knowing. Because Absolute Knowing involves the understanding--and achievement--of true Spirit, which is mankind as such, Absolute Knowing simultaneously involves a universal recognition of every subject, of every human being, as a vehicle of Spirit, and thus (as we shall see later) free and worthy of respect. The struggle for recognition and for self-consciousness are achieved, then,

38. Kojève, 40.

only in the final and highest form of Spirit. Here, in "Self-Consciousness," we witness only the first primitive gropings.

The Master fails to achieve the true recognition he seeks. The Slave fares better: put to work by the Master, he creates culture. Nevertheless, the Slave has still not received the recognition of another consciousness--which is its aim at this stage, just as it was the Master's aim. The stages of the dialectic which follow are the Slave's reactions to this felt need, and to the condition of bondage. In "Stoicism," it aims to be free (and to repress the longing for recognition) by "detaching" itself from the travails of the world. But in so doing it does not achieve real freedom, but only the empty idea of freedom. In "Scepticism" it actively denies the reality of this world, but its deeds belie its words; it continues to live and work in the "unreal" world. In both of these forms of consciousness, the Slave is aping the Master. First it attempts to whip its desires and attachments into shape, like the master of a household. Then, in desperation, it annihilates otherness, but only in thought.

That the forms of Slave-Consciousness should resemble, in some ways, the Master is not surprising. Like the Master, the slave too is driven by Desire, by the need for self-affirmation and the cancellation of the alien other. It is extremely important to note that the dialectic is now

proceeding via the transformations of the Slave-Consciousness alone. The Master has simply dropped out of the picture. Further development of Spirit is possible only through the Slave. The reason for this is that the Slave has been forced to sublimate and re-channel the negative force of Desire. Free to unleash Desire in its most primal form, the Master remains fixated at a quasi-human level and becomes fundamentally irrelevant to the development of Spirit. He was merely the catalyst.³⁹ The result of the dialectical transformations of Slave-Consciousness will be the achievement of Absolute Knowing as I have described it. In effect, this means that ultimately the Slave "actualizes" God. The meek inherit not just the earth, but everything up to and including the hyperouranian spheres.

In the "Unhappy Consciousness" (unglückliches Bewusstsein), the Slave mentality yearns for recognition from a transcendent Ideal, and for the freedom it would enjoy with this being after death. The Trinity now makes an appearance, as Hegel interprets Christianity--in the hands of some of its adherents--as a form of the Unhappy Consciousness.⁴⁰ The Father represents God as inaccessible

39. See Kojève, 47.

40. The first appearance of the Trinity as a concern in Hegel's thought is in the Difference essay of 1801. See G.W.F. Hegel, Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy, trans. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 171. German edition: Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 4 (henceforth,

to finite consciousness. The Son is a tentative reconciliation of the two, but realized in only one person. Spirit is another attempt at reconciliation, this time through a community of those who worship together. Does this last moment, then, fulfill the desire for recognition? It does not, for adequate recognition only occurs when human beings are recognized in their true nature. In the form of the "Unhappy Consciousness," men define themselves insofar as they stand opposed to an empty, abstract ideal which they have projected into the heavens. There is a dearth of self-knowledge here, and, as we have seen, recognition exists only in the intercourse of beings who are truly self-knowing.

The Slave has found some modicum of freedom through work. It has discovered the positive utilization of Desire, as opposed to the barren destruction and domination of the Master.⁴¹ The tragedy of Slave-consciousness, however, is that instead of seeing in this the nature of humanity as such, instead of seeing humanity as the being that creates its world, it projects this nature into a transcendent ideal from which it remains alienated. An overcoming of this alienation is attempted through a tripartite structure: God apart, God in one man, and God in

Differenz), ed. Hartmut Buchner and Otto Pöggler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), 76.

41. Hegel states that "Desire is . . . generally destructive in its satisfaction, just as it is self-seeking in respect of its content" (PS § 428; Petry III, 49-51).

community. All of these elements are, as one would expect, taken up and transformed in the final result of the dialectic. The tripartite God will remain, but its third moment will be just this world-creating humanity--i.e., Spirit--which Slave-Consciousness cannot recognize in itself.

Hegel designates the division of the Phenomenology which follows "Self-Consciousness" simply as "C." "Reason" is its first subdivision, "AA." In AA through CC, all the preceding ground will be covered again. The doubling of the letters suggests a kind of reflexivity, a doubling back. This is indeed what happens, for these sections represent humanity's developing self-awareness.

Consciousness and Self-Consciousness were largely unconscious and reactive. Man was not in control of his life. In "C," the standpoints of mind become more and more self-directed and self-aware. For example, "Reason" can easily be seen to be a return, of sorts, to the standpoint of "Consciousness." In "Consciousness" we could clearly see the first glimmerings of the scientific mentality: the concern with empirical "verification," and the understanding of the object as a collection of universals or forces which in part transcend experience. In "Consciousness," these modes of thought were, in fact, unconscious. In "Reason" they become conscious,

deliberate, methodical. We have moved closer to Absolute Knowing here, but "Reason" does not yet know it.

What Hegel is working with in "Reason" seems to be the Renaissance view of science, and the ideal of man as magus (see Introduction). This form of mind is not occupied with a "beyond," whether a beyond of unknown forces or a divine beyond. Instead, Reason wants to make the world masterable by fitting it in to human categories and forming it according to human ideals. Thus, Desire appears again in a new form. It is in this section that Hegel tells us what he means by Idealism (which I have already explained). "Reason," he writes, "is the certainty of consciousness that it is all reality, thus does Idealism express its concept" (Miller, 140; PG, 158). He develops the Idealism of Reason in three sections: "Observing Reason" (beobachtende Vernunft), "The actualization of rational self-consciousness through itself" (Die Verwirklichung des vernünftigen Selbstbewusstseins durch sich selbst), "Individuality which is real in and for itself" (Die Individualität, welche sich an und für sich selbst reell ist).

"Spirit" is Hegel's turn to the concrete, historical, cultural embodiment of all that he has already discussed. Hegel's allusions to actual history and culture remain largely indirect, but an historical, cultural context always makes itself felt. We should not be confused by

Hegel's use of the term "Spirit" at this point. Here he means it more or less in the sense of what is called in the Encyclopedia "Objective Spirit" or society. Hegel's account of the forms of "Objective Spirit" draws upon history: the Greek polis, Roman civil society, the enthusiasm of Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the "terror," etc. Spirit begins in unreflective commitment to the ethical order of family and community. This is broken down through the imposition of a political system in which individuals are externally related and vie with one another over "rights." The consequence is alienation from the "natural" ethical order. Spirit sets itself up as judge and "reformer" of the ethical order. Chaos ensues. Spirit then attempts to recreate the ethical order it feels it has lost. However, it knows that this is a mere contrivance. It moves from a Kantian concern with disinterested duty-following, to a commitment to "individual conscience."⁴²

What is obvious from all of this is that morally the subject cannot stand on its own. The original phase of the moral life may be unreflective, but no adequate replacement for it can be found through the rational, critical faculties of the individual. Hegel's argument in "Spirit" is essentially the same as that of Plato's Crito: the

42. There is an obvious similarity here to some of the material covered in "Reason." The difference is that in "Spirit" Hegel is dealing with the development of "ethical life" as a whole, from unreflective acceptance of tradition, to the destructive force of "autonomous reason."

nomoi--laws, customs, and traditions--have "given birth" to the subject; it is madness to destroy them, and life without them is not worth living.

However, if Hegel opposes "unreflectiveness" in general, then he cannot advocate a return to the initial phase of ethical life. On the other hand, as we have seen, separation from this initial phase appears disastrous. Hegel's solution is similar to Hume's philosophy of "common life": he will advocate a conscious and, within limits, critical reappropriation of the traditions, customs, and practices of community. These make society possible, and "enlightened" societies exist only insofar as something of this "benighted" bedrock remains for them to stand on. Spirit's ability to realize the Idea in the world and to actualize Science is a communal affair; it is realizable only through civilized society. Thus, freedom, if it is to avoid the "fury of destruction," must involve willing or affirming the conditions of freedom. Hegel develops these ideas much more fully and clearly in the Philosophy of Right (1821).

Hegel believes that religion is one of the necessary conditions of freedom, but he also believes that religion has developed or been perfected over time. At every stage, however, it was something that could be the property both of the ordinary man, who can have it "unreflectively," and of the thinker (for the Divine = the Truth). When "Spirit"

gives way, then, to "Religion," this is not a "cancellation" of Spirit. (Hegel's system, of course, returns to Spirit.) At the end of history we have a perfected Spirit, with a perfected religion, and a perfected social system which supports religion and common life.

Through Christianity, the otherness of other subjects breaks down, for we are all "God's children." The egoistic Desire to negate the other has not, however, triumphed. Though "otherness" has in one sense broken down, it has broken down precisely through the recognition that the "other" and I are identical through the inherent, inviolable dignity of human nature (the source of this dignity will shortly be revealed). In effect, what has happened is that Desire has been transferred from egoistic individuals to God, but Spirit does not yet realize the identity of God and Spirit, and it does not yet see that the dignity of man lies in his world-creating--and, in truth, God-creating--power.

Hegel's discussion of Religion is divided into three major sections: "Natural Religion" (Natürliche Religion), the "Religion of Art" (Die Kunst-Religion), and "Revealed Religion" (Die offenbare Religion). In all of the forms of Religion the dichotomy between finite and infinite, human and divine, remains intact. It is thought that this dichotomy is necessary for religion to exist at all. This

is correct, but Hegel sees religion as working for its own dissolution since, at every step, it seeks to overcome the divide between God and man. Man "yearns" after God (as in the Unhappy Consciousness), prays to God, seeks God's favor, tries to represent God in art, etc. The telos of this process is man actually reaching God; God and man becoming one. Hegel does not promise this or spell out how it can be accomplished. He believes it has already been accomplished, in Christianity. Christianity, in Hegel's account, is "revealed religion" or the "Absolute Religion."

In the section on "Revealed Religion," Hegel presents speculative interpretations of traditional Christian doctrines. He interprets the Trinity in a manner which has now become familiar to us. The Father is unrealized Idea, which gives birth to an other (the Son) who "reflects" and embodies Him. This reflection back into the Father is the third moment, that of Spirit. We can see that the primal Desire to annul otherness which sets the Phenomenology in motion and is present in all of nature is expressed here: God the Father needs an "other," but the other's "reflection" of God cancels its otherness.⁴³

In Christianity man becomes conscious of God as Spirit itself. Christianity teaches that God became a man, Jesus Christ. But the truth of Christianity, Hegel holds, lies

43. The subdivision "Faith and pure insight" (Der Glaube und die reine Einsicht), in "Spirit," anticipates this account of the Trinity (Miller, 325; PG, 352).

not in the historical Jesus but in the idea of the unification of God and man as such. This truth is not revealed explicitly by Christianity. It is revealed by speculative philosophy. Hegel writes that,

in this religion the Divine Being is revealed. Its being revealed obviously consists in this, that what it is, is known. But it is known precisely in its being known as Spirit, as a being that is essentially a self-conscious being. For there is something hidden from consciousness if its object is for consciousness an "other" or something alien, and if it does not know it as its own self. This concealment ceases when the Absolute Being qua Spirit is the object of consciousness.

Putting this another way, Hegel states that this means that the object of consciousness "is now the Self." It is, he writes, "the indissoluble unity with itself, the universal that is immediately such. It is the pure Concept [Begriff], pure Thought or being-for-self which is immediately being, and consequently being-for-another, and this being-for-another is immediately returned into itself and in communion with itself; it is, therefore, alone the true revelation" (Miller, 459; PG, 503).⁴⁴ Nevertheless,

44. In the Logos of Christianity (which Hegel captures in speculative form in his Logic) there is a return to the

Hegel has not made God identical with the individual. Spirit is to be conceived along the lines of Rousseau's "general will" or the Kantian-Fichtean "transcendental ego." It is humanity as such; a universal subject.⁴⁵ For Hegel, the death of the savior signifies the dissolution of Christ's individual God-nature and the realization, through the resurrection, of the God-nature in Spirit, in all men in common.

This result, however, is not known through Christianity but only through speculative philosophy, which Hegel sketches in the final section of the Phenomenology, "Absolute Knowing." In this short and difficult chapter, Hegel runs through the forms Spirit has taken thus far in the Phenomenology. Recall that everything from "Reason" to "Absolute Knowing" is grouped by Hegel together as the third major division of the work, "C." Hegel now explicitly speaks of "Absolute Knowing," the highest phase of "C," as reconciling "Consciousness" and "Self-Consciousness." We have seen all along how this must be the case: Hegelian Science will be the total grasp of an individual--substance become subject--which, just because

Light of the Natural Religion: the pure aether of thought is the intangible "substance" prefigured in Light. In his Philosophy of Nature, Hegel makes this correspondence between light and Logos clear.

45. Findlay writes: "The self-conscious Spirit which plays the part of God in [Hegel's] system is not the complex, existent person, but the impersonal, reasonable element in him, which, by a necessary process, more and more 'takes over' the individual, and becomes manifest and conscious in him" (143).

it is a grasp of subject and thus a consummation of the quest for self-knowledge, simultaneously involves a universal recognition of man in his true nature.

Despite his reputation for obscurity, Hegel has made it clear where he was going right from the beginning. In the Preface, he wrote,

what seems to be outside of [the self], to be an activity directed against it, is really its own doing, and Substance shows itself to be essentially Subject. When it has shown this completely, Spirit has made its existence identical with its essence; it has itself for its object just as it is, and the abstract element of immediacy, and of the separation of knowing and truth, is overcome. Being is then absolutely mediated; it is a substantial content which is just as immediately the property of the 'I', it is self-like or the Concept [Miller, 21; PG, 28-29].

Hegel explains the meaning of "Absolute Knowing" as follows:

Spirit which at the same time gives its complete and true content the form of the Self [die Form des Selbsts] and thereby realizes its Notion as remaining in its Notion in this realization--this is Absolute

Knowing; it is Spirit that knows itself in the shape of Spirit, or a comprehensive knowing. Truth is not only in itself completely identical with certainty, but it also has the shape of self-certainty, or it is in its existence in the form of self-knowledge. . . . But this identity [of Truth and certainty] is now a fact, in that the content has received the shape of the Self. As a result, the element of existence, essence itself, has become the Concept, the form of objectivity for consciousness. Spirit, appearing to consciousness in this element, or what is the same thing, produced in it by consciousness, is Science [Miller, 485-486; PG, 523].

Hegel's treatment of time is crucial to his understanding of Absolute Knowing and the Concept. Time, Hegel states, "is the Concept itself that is there" (Die Zeit ist der Begriff selbst, der da ist; Miller, 487; PG, 525). Time just is the playing out of Concept in the world. But when Spirit knows itself, and the Concept is thus actualized, time is cancelled. Hegel writes that "Science does not appear in time and in the actual world before Spirit has attained to this consciousness about itself," Miller, 486; PG, 523). Obviously, time did not literally stop when Hegel completed his system, so he must

mean something special by "time." In fact, he really means that history ends with the actualization of Science.

Hegel is presupposing a distinction between cyclical and linear views of time. For Hegel, cyclical time is characteristic of nature. Because everything in nature constantly repeats, with nothing new appearing under the sun (or so he thought), natural, cyclical time is in reality atemporal. Real time presupposes real change, the coming into being of the new. True time, then, is linear, and it is found not in the realm of nature but only in the realm of Spirit. True time is history. Hegel believes he has grasped the vector of the line of history, the development of Spirit to self-consciousness, and believes it has reached its endpoint or goal.⁴⁶

History is thus over for Hegel. To be sure, things will continue to happen, but nothing really new will happen to Spirit. Human nature and God are realized, and with them a universal recognition of humanity as, so to speak, "metaphysically free" (the principle of Hegelian Idealism). (Because the ideal state, which has also realized itself in

46. "The movement of carrying forward the form of [Spirit's] self-knowledge is the labour which it accomplishes as actual history" (Miller, 488; PG, 430). "[The] other side of [Spirit's] becoming, History, is a conscious, self-mediating process, Spirit emptied out into Time; but this externalization, this kenosis, is equally an externalization of itself. This becoming presents a slow-moving succession of spirits, a gallery of images, each of which, endowed with all the riches of Spirit, moves thus slowly just because the the self has to penetrate and digest this entire wealth of its substance" (Miller, 492; PG, 530).

history, is fully discussed by Hegel only in the Philosophies of Spirit and Right, I will deal with it in Chapter Seven.) The earlier forms of Spirit will continue to pop up from time to time: "Master" types--like Stalin--will arise and attempt to gain recognition through domination, zealous reformers will attempt to remake the world, "Beautiful Souls" will waste away on tofu and granola, etc. But these are mere ghosts out of the past. Time after history ist nur ein Gleichnis.⁴⁷

In "Absolute Knowing" Hegel also sketches out the direction in which the remainder of the system of Science will go. Those fond of characterizing the Phenomenology simplistically as the "ladder" to Hegel's system will be disappointed to find that the system returns to the beginning of the Phenomenology. In "Sense-Certainty" consciousness began its attempt to grasp the object at the level of simple immediacy. Immediacy, however, was taken for granted as a "category" or "structure." In the Logic, we return to the level of immediacy in the "Doctrine of Being" (Hegel does not say this outright in the "Absolute Knowing" chapter, but this is clearly his meaning). The divisions of the Phenomenology correspond to the divisions of the Logic as follows:

47. Hegel has reappropriated the deep truth of Parmenides's doctrine, by way of Hermes Trismegistus: God (Being = Thought) is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere there is Spirit, and whose circumference is nowhere. Apart from this, nothing has being and "time" is illusion. (See Introduction).

Phenomenology

A. Consciousness

B. Self-Consciousness
thinking")

C.:

AA. Reason

BB. Spirit

CC. Religion

DD. Absolute Knowing

Logic

Being ("perceptual thinking")

Essence ("reflective

Concept:

Categories of the Concept

express the identity of

Reason, Spirit, God,

and the Absolute

of the philosophers.

The transition from the Phenomenology to the Logic is similar to the transition from the Judgments to the Categories in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. Kant begins by laying out a Table of Judgments expressing what he takes to be a complete resume of the judgment-acts of consciousness. The move to the Categories is a move toward considering the "conditions" of the Judgments, the "presentational structures" that must exist to make the Judgments possible. Thus, the judgment of Quantity (Universal, Particular, Singular) is made possible by the categories of Quantity: Unity, Plurality, Totality.⁴⁸ The move is to a "meta-level." Similarly, the Hegelian Logic is an expression--a recollection, in fact--of the thought-

48. Critique of Pure Reason, B95-B116.

forms which underlie the acts of Spirit. Spirit comes into its own when it consciously appropriates and understands these thought-forms as a system.⁴⁹ In the Encyclopedia Logic, in a passage describing the relationship of that work to the Phenomenology, Hegel writes that the "principal aim" of the Logic "is to contribute to the insight that the questions about the nature of cognition, about faith and so on, that confront us in representation, and which we take to be fully concrete, are in point of fact reducible to simple determinations of thought, which only get their genuine treatment in the Logic" (EL § 25; Geraets, 64-65). In the Philosophy of Nature, we return to the concrete world in which we find the categories of the Logic "expressed." The Philosophy of Spirit will show the "emergence" from nature of Spirit, whose nature it is to "negate" nature, and to write the Phenomenology and the Logic.

49. As should be obvious by now, my use of the term "thought-forms" does not imply that Hegel's Logic is mere epistemology. Hegel writes in the Preface that "Being is Thought" (Miller, 33; PG, 41). Like Plato's doctrine of forms, Hegel's Logic is simultaneously metaphysics, theory of knowledge, and groundwork for a philosophy of nature. Hyppolite writes that the Phenomenology "culminates in the conception of a science which is simultaneously the science of being and the position of the self in being. This thought of the self, this ontology, which is the thought of thought, at the same time that it is the thought of all things, constitutes Absolute Knowledge." See Jean Hyppolite, The Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. S. Cherniak and J. Heckman (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 574.

Hegel ends the Phenomenology with an image which I will discuss at length in section three of this chapter. He writes that history as comprehended by the science of Phenomenology, Spirit as displayed in all its forms and in its apotheosis, constitutes "the recollection and the Golgotha [die Schädelstätte] of Absolute Spirit, the actuality, truth, and certainty of his throne, without which he would be lifeless and alone." Paraphrasing Schiller's poem Die Freundschaft, Hegel concludes, "Only, 'from the chalice of this realm of spirits, foams for Him his own infinity'" (Miller, 493; PG, 531).

Having drunk from this chalice and experienced the Mysteries for ourselves, we are now ready to inquire about their origins.

3. Hermetic influences

(a) Jena

The Phenomenology of Spirit was conceived and written in Jena, where Hegel lived for about six years. We know that during this period Hegel was actively interested in theosophy, a holdover from his time in Frankfurt (see Chapter Three). It is likely that both the triangle fragment and diagram date from the Jena period, though the diagram may have been drawn just prior.

Hegel's lectures on the Philosophy of Nature during this time reflect an ongoing interest in alchemy. In the

lectures of 1803 the division "metals-combustibles-neutrals-earths" is connected with Paracelsus's distinction "mercury-sulphur-salt."⁵⁰ To repeat H.S. Harris's observation, this reflects Hegel's peculiar insistence on "finding an earlier pedigree [for his observations]. . . in Paracelsus and Böhme."⁵¹ Hegel also speaks of the "virgin earth," an old alchemical conception, possibly originating with Böhme, which we first encountered in Chapter Two in connection with Goethe's alchemical experiments. The 1803 lectures also contain discussions of "noble" and "base" metals, as well as a hierarchical structure of metals (though Hegel is somewhat sceptical of the latter).⁵² As noted in the preceding chapter Hegel sometimes referred ideas to "the elders", which Harris takes to mean "the alchemists."⁵³

It was in Jena as well that Hegel became deeply immersed in Böhme. H.S. Harris writes that "I am inclined to believe in Böhme's influence upon Hegel from 1801 onwards."⁵⁴ Harris contends that initially Hegel was uncritically enthusiastic in his embrace of Böhme. In 1804-05, however, he began to take a critical distance,

50. Harris, Night Thoughts, 274; Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 6 (henceforth, Differenz), ed. Hartmut Buchner and Otto Pöggler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), 114, 4-17. Harris also notes that in the same manuscript Hegel links his use of "earth" with Böhme.

51. Harris, Night Thoughts, 278.

52. Ibid., 274.

53. Ibid., 274n.

54. Ibid., 85; as Harris notes there are indications of Böhme's influence in the manuscripts of 1801-03 (161).

while remaining sympathetic. As discussed in Chapter One, Hegel's account of Böhme in his 1805 Lectures on the History of Philosophy is strikingly detailed and positive. He devotes considerable space to Böhme: almost as much space as he allots to Spinoza. In fact, Hegel contrasts Spinoza unfavorably with Böhme (more on this point in the following section).⁵⁵

Hegel's interest in, and sympathy for, Böhme must have been widely known. In 1811, one of Hegel's former Jena students, Peter Gabriel van Ghert (1782-1852), a Dutchman, sent him Böhme's collected works as a gift. Van Ghert would not have done this unless it was plain to those who knew Hegel in Jena how important Böhme was to him. Hegel thanked van Ghert in a letter of July 29, 1811: "Now I can study Jakob Böhme much more closely than before, since I was not myself in possession of his writings. His theosophy will always be one of the most remarkable attempts of a penetrating yet uncultivated man to comprehend the innermost essential nature of the absolute being. For Germany, he has the special interest of being really the first German philosopher."⁵⁶ This shows not

55. LHP III, 288; not present in Werke, see Sämtliche Werke, Vol. 19, ed. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart: Fromann, 1928), 377.

56. Butler, 573; Hoffmeister #192. The fact that Hegel did not own Böhme's works in Jena should not suggested half-hearted interest in them. It was difficult in those days for a young associate professor, with an annual salary of only 100 thalers, to afford a well-stocked library. Besides, editions of Böhme were not very common then.

only that Hegel intended to continue his study of Böhme, but also that he regarded Böhme as a genuine philosopher.

Hegel writes further in the same letter that Böhme's endeavour "constitutes the most arduous struggle both to bring the deep speculative [content], which he holds in his intuition, into representation and so to master the element of representational [thinking] in order that the speculative content might be expressed in it."⁵⁷

Certainly, Böhme's thought is paradigmatic of "picture-thinking," but given the limits of his medium his thought comes amazingly close, in this inadequate form, to capturing the Concept. Further, Hegel thinks that Böhme realized this inadequacy and struggled against it. Hegel continues: "There remains so little that is constant and fixed in his work, because he feels everywhere the inadequacy of representation to what he is trying to achieve, and feels representation again overturned."⁵⁸

Hegel's social contacts in Jena must have encouraged him in his enthusiasm for Böhme and theosophy in general. David Walsh writes that Jena in Hegel's day

had become the focal point of the German Romantic movement, and many of its greatest figures were assembled there, including Tieck, Novalis, Schelling, F. Schlegel, and A.W. Schlegel. Within that company

57. Ibid., 573-74.

58. Ibid., 574.

an intense center of interest was formed by their rediscovery of the German mystical tradition. For the first time the works of the great medieval and Reformation mystics were becoming widely available within their native land. The appearance of Eckhart and Böhme in particular was heralded as a liberating release from the deadness of Enlightenment rationalism. They read, too, the major eighteenth-century commentators of Böhme . . . and the Swabian pietist theologian Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, in whom they found a more contemporary application of the great mystical insights of the past.⁵⁹

Schelling was, of course, an enthusiastic reader of Böhme and Oetinger and likely encouraged Hegel's interest in theosophy. Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853) had left Jena by the time Hegel arrived there, but Hegel was unquestionably familiar with his work. The "Force and the Understanding" section of the Phenomenology includes a discussion of what Hegel calls "the topsy-turvy world," die verkehrte Welt. It so happens that in 1799 Tieck published a bizaare little play entitled Die verkehrte Welt.⁶⁰

59. David Walsh, "The Historical Dialectic of Spirit: Jacob Böhme's Influence on Hegel" in History and System: Hegel's Philosophy of History, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 22-23.

60. Donald Phillip Verene was the first commentator to point out the possible connection between Hegel's "verkehrte Welt" and Tieck's. See his Hegel's Recollection: A Study of Images in the Phenomenology of

Tieck had discovered Böhme's Aurora in a Berlin bookstall. Informed that it was despised by the rationalists, he immediately purchased the volume and proceeded to devour its contents. As a result, as one of Tieck's biographers states, "None of his works written between 1799 and 1801 is free of Böhme . . ."⁶¹ In Der neue Herkules am Scheidewege (1800), later renamed Der Autor, Tieck has his character "der Altfrank" speak glowingly of Böhme:

Aurora, that famed Morning Red,
Writ by the prophet whom they chide,
To whom all worlds are open wide,
Whose sacred, undefiled tongue
Of God's profundity hath sung.
Tis Jakob Böhme, German sage,
Let him thy mournfulness assuage,
His every word gives thee delight,
Surrounded with a splendour bright,
He's spun around his head divine
A halo glorious and fine.⁶²

Spirit (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 39-58. I will not summarize Verene's commentary here, as it would involve too detailed a digression into the intricacies of this section of the Phenomenology.

61. Roger Paulin, Ludwig Tieck: A Literary Biography (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 100.

62. Translated by Edwin H. Zeydel in his Ludwig Tieck, the German Romanticist: A Critical Study (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935), 106. I have altered the translation slightly.

Tieck, who was also influenced by Eckhart and Tauler, introduced Novalis to Böhme. In commemoration of this, Novalis later wrote his poem "An Tieck," in which he called Tieck der Verkündiger der Morgenröte ("Herald of Morning Glow"; the subtitle of Böhme's Aurora was Morgenröte im Aufgang).⁶³ In speaking about his time in Jena, Tieck reported that he found Schelling very receptive to Böhme's theosophy.⁶⁴ In Munich in 1804, Tieck established a close relationship with Franz von Baader.

(b) The Hermetic subtext to Hegel's Preface

What we know about the intellectual milieu of Jena can shed a great deal of light on some of the mysteries surrounding the composition of the Phenomenology. It is often difficult for interpreters to understand who Hegel is attacking in the Phenomenology--especially in the Preface--and why he describes his own project in the peculiar way that he does. I have already suggested mystical initiation as one possible framework for understanding the project of the Phenomenology. I wish now to suggest something even more radical: the background against which we must understand Hegel's programmatic remarks in the Preface is his own critical appreciation of Hermetic theosophy.

63. Ibid., 127.

64. Ibid., 130.

Hegel's attitude toward the Hermeticism of Böhme and others (Proclus, Bruno, Oetinger, Kabbalism, etc.) is similar to his attitude toward mainstream religion: he believes that it approaches the truth very closely, but is hindered by its "sensuous" mode of expression. Hegel opposes the school of Romantic intuitionism, often inspired by Hermeticism, which believes that truth is to be felt or intuited. Hegel makes his feeling about the Romantics very plain early on in the Preface. He writes that "Such minds, when they give themselves up to the uncontrolled ferment of [the divine] substance, imagine that, by drawing a veil over self-consciousness and surrendering understanding they become the beloved of God to whom He gives His wisdom in sleep; and hence what they in fact receive, and bring forth to birth in their sleep, is nothing but dreams" (Miller, 6; PG, 9).

Just a few passages later occurs the famous paragraph in which Hegel attacks a certain conception of the Absolute as "the night in which . . . all cows are black" (Miller, 9; PG, 13). Commentators usually take this as a reference to Schelling. Indeed, in a letter to Schelling of May 1, 1807, Hegel seems to try to "soften the blow" of the Preface, which was about to be printed. He writes that "In the Preface you will not find that I have been too hard on the shallowness that makes so much mischief with your forms in particular and degrades your science into mere

formalism."⁶⁵ But there is more than one passage in the Preface which can be taken as addressing itself to Schelling or his followers.

Let us look more closely, then, at the passage in question. A few lines up from the "cows" simile we read the following: "Dealing with something from the perspective of the Absolute [according to Hegel's opponents] consists merely in declaring that, although one has been speaking of it just now as something definite, yet in the Absolute, the $A = A$, there is nothing of the kind, for therein all is one" (Miller, 9; PG, 13). To be sure, this sounds like it might be a criticism of Schelling's view of the Absolute as the "indifference point" (the language of " $A = A$," of course, was used by Schelling, who appropriated it from Fichte). However, it sounds even more like the common mystical doctrine of the "coincidence of opposites," such as we find in Cusa and many others. Further, Hegel uses the phrase "therein all is one" (darin sei alles Eins). In writing this, how could Hegel not have recalled the youthful motto he shared in common with Schelling and Hölderlin: hen kai pan?⁶⁶ Hegel continues: "To pit this single insight, that in the Absolute everything is the same, against the full body of articulated cognition, which

65. Butler, 80; Hoffmeister #95.

66. In his Preface to the second edition (1827) of the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel equates the philosophy of alles eins, "All is one" with the "Identity-System" (Geraets 7; Werke 8, 18).

at least seeks and demands such fulfillment, to palm off its Absolute as the night in which, as the saying goes, all cows are black--this is cognition naively reduced to vacuity."⁶⁷

Hegel is attacking Schelling here, but he is attacking Schelling as the latest exponent of a type of mysticism which he believes is inadequate: a pantheistic conception of the Absolute in which all is one.⁶⁸ (Hegel, of course, was well aware of Schelling's ties to mysticism and theosophy, and Schelling's willingness to publicly ally himself with these currents.) Hegel is opposing this kind of mysticism to the sort represented by Böhme. Consider Hegel's remarks about Spinoza's pantheism in his lectures of 1805, in which he states that, "His [Spinoza's] philosophy is only fixed substance, not yet Spirit; in it we do not confront ourselves. God is not Spirit here because he is not the triune. Substance remains rigid and petrified, without Böhme's sources [Quellen]. The particular determinations in the form of thought-determinations are not Böhme's source-spirits which work and unfold in one another."⁶⁹ Hegel accepts the Schellingian doctrine of the Absolute as the Whole which

67. Ibid.

68. In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion of 1827, Hegel entertains the suggestion that the Identity Philosophy of Schelling is equivalent to pantheism (LPR I, 374-75; VPR I, 272).

69. LHP III, 288; not present in Werke, see Sämtliche Werke, Vol. 19, ed. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart: Fromann, 1928), 377.

transcends the distinction between subject and object. He merely contends that without a developmental account of how this Absolute becomes actual--which constitutes, at the same time, a description of its internal moments--"the Absolute" is merely an empty phrase. As far as Hegel and his contemporaries knew, this "developmental" approach was Böhme's innovation--and it is, of course, precisely the respect in which Böhme's brand of "mysticism" is different from that of Cusa, Eckhart, and others.

A couple of paragraphs later in the Preface we find Hegel speaking of Substance becoming Subject, claiming that the Absolute is "the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual" (Miller, 10; PG, 14). Hegel, in the next passage, then immediately makes the quasi-mystical observation that "the life of God and divine cognition may well be spoken of as a disporting of Love with itself; but this idea sinks into mere edification, and even insipidity, if it lacks the seriousness, the suffering, the patience, and the labour of the negative" (Miller, 10; PG, 4-15). Hegel is saying that thinking which draws inspiration from such mystical metaphors is fine, and much can be learned from it, but it is empty unless it is supplemented by the careful, painstaking working out of the moments of the "life of God." Hegel ends this passage with the admonition

that the Absolute must be conceived in "the whole wealth of the developed form. Only then is it conceived and expressed as an actuality" (Miller, 11; PG, 15).

The next paragraph provides the key which explains all. It begins: "The true is the whole" (Das Wahre ist das Ganze). In Chapter Two we saw that the Oetinger, developing the ideas of Böhme, writes that, "The truth is a whole [Die Wahrheit ist ein Ganzes]; when one finally receives this total, synoptic vision of the truth, it matters not whether one begins by considering this part or that."⁷⁰ Oetinger also sometimes spoke of his Ganze as equivalent to Geist, and treated it as an intensum: a thing which cannot be divided into literal pieces, only into noetic moments. In an intensum such as Geist, the whole is immanent in every part. It is this immanence that enables us to progress from one moment to another in the gradual articulation of the whole.⁷¹ As noted in Chapter Two, the theme of the truth as a whole (or the whole) is a perennial theme of Swabian speculative pietism.⁷²

Considering the context of Hegel's "True is the whole" passage--his response to Schelling and to the the mystics of the coincidentia oppositorum--it seems clear that Hegel is rebuking his fellow Swabian by deliberately invoking the

70. F.C. Oetinger, Sämtliche Schriften, Vol. 5, ed Karl Chr. Eberh. Ehmman (Stuttgart, 1858-64), 45.

71. Robert Schneider, Schellings und Hegels schwäbische Geistessahnen (Würzburg-Aumühle: Konrad Triltsch Verlag, 1938), 114.

72. Ibid., 56.

authority of Oetinger and Württemberg theosophy. He is exhorting Schelling to become more Böhmean.⁷³ Coupling this with Hegel's approving attitude toward Böhme, we can see that there is a hidden subtext to the Preface.

Although nothing in it is completely transparent, the surface of the Preface involves Hegel opposing himself to all previous philosophy (as, for instance, in his odd critique of philosophical prefaces). The subtext, however, involves a response to all previous mysticism as well.⁷⁴

Just as Hegel wants philosophers to "lay aside the title 'love of knowing [Wissen],'" and achieve actual knowing, so he wants to raise "mysticism" to the level of theosophy, to knowing the wisdom of God. Mysticism lets mystery remain. Like Aristotle, Hegel wants to remove wonder; he wants to penetrate into the Absolute and let the light of truth shine where before there was darkness, absence, hiddenness. None of this is inconsistent with Hegel's critique of Böhmean-style theosophy. Hegel, as everyone knows, sees religion in all its forms, and

73. Böhme's Ungrund, though itself indeterminate, is supposed to contain all determinations. This sounds, of course, rather like Schelling's "indifference point," which could be the reason why Hegel never mentions Böhme's Ungrund, apparently considering it a dispensable part of Böhme's philosophy.

74. The reasons why such material would be consigned to the "esoteric" dimension of the text should be clear. We have seen that intolerance against admirers of Oetinger existed in Hegel's time. Also, it must be kept in mind that the Phenomenology belongs, in truth, to an older tradition of literary work in which allusion to one's predecessors is largely indirect, and it is simply assumed that readers will recognize the works or authors being alluded to.

particularly Christianity, as a sort of halfway house to Absolute Knowing, and his own philosophy is animated by religious categories and symbolic forms.

In effect, Hegel is saying in the Preface that mysticism (including Schellingian 'philosophical mysticism') is a clue to the nature of the Absolute, but it is only in its highest form, Böhmean-Oetingerite theosophy, that mysticism reaches its apex and takes a form that is strikingly close to what the philosophical grasp of the Absolute requires. Hegel is engaging in philosophical syncretism. He is opening the doors of his temple of Absolute Spirit to the Böhmean theosophists and saying, "Your God is my God, but if you wish to go a further step and truly know God, you must submit yourselves to the seriousness, the suffering, the patience, and the labour of my initiation." (We shall shortly see this demonstrated even more clearly in Hegel's account in the Phenomenology of "revealed religion"--Christianity--which is strikingly Böhmean.)

(c) *Böhmean elements in the Phenomenology*

David Walsh has argued that Hegel's use in the Phenomenology of such terms as "element," "aether," "light," "expansion," and "contraction" has its roots in his acquaintance with the Böhmean-Oetingerite tradition, as

well as with Paracelsus.⁷⁵ (I will discuss Hegel's concept of "aether" much more extensively in Chapter Six.) It is in Hegel's section on "Self-Consciousness", however, that the influence of Jakob Böhme becomes evident in its most substantive form. Böhme was the first to recognize that selfhood develops in opposition to the not-self. (Fichte and Hegel are merely Böhme's followers in this regard, as are Sartre, Piaget, and others.) But Böhme even had the audacity to claim that this must apply to God's self as well.⁷⁶ In his remarks in the Lectures of 1805, Hegel includes the following quote from Böhme: "Nothing can be revealed to itself without opposition [Wiederwärtigkeit]: For if there is nothing that opposes it, then it always goes out of itself and never returns to itself again. If it does not return into itself, as into that from which it originated, then it knows nothing of its origin."⁷⁷

For Böhme, what Hegel calls Desire--the urge to annihilate the other and absolutize self--is Evil. Since a

75. Walsh, "The Historical Dialectic of Spirit," 28.

76. David Walsh writes that, "At the core of his construction was Böhme's discovery that conflict and opposition were necessary to the self-revelation of God. It was an extrapolation from what is required for the self-realization of man to what is required for the self-realization of God," David Walsh, "A Mythology of Reason: The Persistence of Pseudo-Science in the Modern World," in Science, Pseudo-Science, and Utopianism in Early Modern Thought, ed. Stephen McKnight (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 153.

77. See Jakob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1955-61), vol. 4, Vom Göttlicher Beschaulichkeit, Ch. 1, par. 8. Hegel quotes this passage in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy III, 203; Werke 20, 106.

true, human self is possible only through interaction with otherness, the "self" that this nihilating impulse creates, if left to its own devices, is one which does not raise itself above the animalistic concerns of pleasure, comfort, and satisfaction. This is the "criminal type," the man who stands in opposition to all else, "looking out for number one."⁷⁸ The paradox of this "selfishness" is that it involves no real self at all. Böhme designates this way of being as "the Sour"--it is an indrawing, a pulling away, a shutting off and negation of all else (see Chapter One). He regards it as a necessary moment of the being of God and all creation.⁷⁹ Hegel writes of this doctrine that "Böhme has really here penetrated into the utmost depths of divine essence; evil, matter, or whatever it has been called, is the I = I, the Being-for-self, the true negativity" (LHP III, 206; Werke 20, 109). Everything good that subsequently comes to be, is only through having overcome this negative moment.

78. Just before the "Böhme myth" in the Phenomenology (see below), Hegel writes: "Evil [Böse] appears as the primary existence of the inwardly-turned consciousness" (Miller, 468; PG, 504). Hegel writes in the Philosophy of Spirit that "evil is nothing else than Spirit which puts its separate individuality before all else" (PS § 382 Z; Petry I, 51).

79. Speaking of Hegel's account of plant life in the 1805-06 Philosophy of Nature, H.S. Harris writes, "Every 'part' of 'life' as the plant displays it for us, is a satanic urge to be the whole kind 'for itself' or on its own account. We have to conceive of life as an absolute tension of imperialism and anarchy in order to comprehend what its most elementary form . . . can do and will do, once planted in the earth" (Night Thoughts, 447).

This is exactly Hegel's own position. This negative impulse present in human nature is a "tool" used by the Cunning of Reason to actualize Spirit and God. It is necessary to ultimately actualize all that is good: religion, morality, society, justice, etc. We can see in this how Hegel has reappropriated the Christian doctrine of Original Sin. Hegel holds that Spirit is by nature evil. But this evil can be utilized in such a way that it brings good into the world. Robert Schneider states that Oetinger, like Hegel, sees knowledge as developing through the negative force of Desire (Begierde). He writes that "the stuff of Concrete Spirit begins in Hegel as in Oetinger with drive [Trieb] and Desire [Begierde]." ⁸⁰

During the period 1804-05, Hegel wrote out and then criticized a "myth" concerning the fall of Lucifer. Hegel portrays nature in its separation from God as evil. He writes, "God, having turned toward nature and expressed Himself in the pomp and dull repetition of its forms, became aware of His expansion . . . and became angry over it. Wrath [Zorn] is this formation, this contraction into an empty point. He finds Himself in this way, with His being poured out into the unending, restless infinity, where there is no present but an empty transcendence of limit, which always remains even as it is transcended." ⁸¹

80. R. Schneider, 126

81. Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1936), 364-65.

God's "Wrath" here invites comparison, of course, to Böhme's "sour" (Herb), though the parallel is not exact. In his Lectures on the History of Philosophy Hegel employs the term Zorn to speak of Böhme's theosophy, identifying the "first Principium" of Böhme's thought with Gott in Zorn (LHP III, 192; Werke 20, 95).⁸²

Hegel continues, "The anger of God, here fixed outside Himself in His otherness, the fallen Lucifer, rose up against God and his beauty made him arrogant. Nature, through consciousness of its own form, brought it to completion and flattered itself over it."⁸³ God's wrath, then, according to Hegel, becomes the spirit of Lucifer, who is at home with the finite and ephemeral. Again, there is a clear parallel to Böhme's idea that evil or the demonic is a moment of God; a moment "broken off," as it were, from the divine life. This is exactly what human Spirit is, before its consummation: a moment broken off from the whole. Self-consciousness "is wrath itself, the ignition [Entzündung], of wrath within it which burns itself out and consumes its arrogant pomp."⁸⁴

However, as one might expect, through the finite realm of nature Spirit rises up and can transcend this evil. It does so in this "myth" through understanding and making peace with its own finitude. Hegel writes, "The consumed

82. See also LHP III, 206; Werke 20, 109.

83. Ibid., 365.

84. Ibid.

nature rises up in a newer, more ideal form, like a realm of shadows which has lost its first life, the appearance of its spirit after the death of its life. But this new form [Spirit] is the overcoming of the evil, the enduring of the glowing fire [Glut] of pain in the center point, where as purified it leaves all the flakes behind in the crucible [Tiegel], a residuum, which is the pure nothing. It raises itself up as a freer spirit, which sees its radiance only in nature."⁸⁵ (Note the use of the alchemical imagery of "purification.")

Hegel then immediately goes on to criticize this account--which he refers to as "the intuitions of Barbarians" (die Anschauungen der Barbarei)--because in it Spirit remains unconscious of the fact that it itself is the source of this process of the divine self-alienation and return. Hegel appears to think that this further, higher realization is necessary to "complete" Böhmean theosophy. Despite his objection to the "barbarism" of the Böhmean conception (which is repeated in the 1805 lectures), Hegel is clearly so close in spirit to Böhme that he can generate Böhmean-style "myths" with ease.

Furthermore, much of the language and spirit of Hegel's "Böhme myth" recur in the "Revealed Religion" section of the Phenomenology, and there his attitude toward

85. Ibid.

Böhme is more positive.⁸⁶ David Walsh writes that Hegel's account is "from start to finish identical with the theosophic Christianity of Böhme."⁸⁷ I have already mentioned that in "Revealed Religion" Hegel presents speculative readings of various Christian dogmas. It is in his treatment of the fall from paradise that the Böhme myth reappears. Paradise for Hegel represents the innocence of immersion in "pure immediacy," such as we find in Sense-Certainty. The withdrawal into "thought" is the loss of innocence. Having turned inward, consciousness now represents "Evil." The parallel to Böhme's "Sour" is obvious. But, Hegel says, "Evil" requires a "Good," and indeed we find that consciousness has split into "Evil" and "Good." (Hegel is not very clear, however, about what moment of consciousness corresponds to the "Good.")

Hegel then states, "It can therefore be said that it is the very first-born Son of Light [Lucifer] himself who fell because he withdrew into himself or became self-centred, but that in his place another was at once created" (Miller, 468; PG, 504). Just as in the "myth" of 1804-05, Hegel immediately distances himself from this way of conceiving things: "Such a form of expression as 'fallen' which, like the expression 'Son,' belongs to representation

86. The Böhme-Lucifer issue reappears in the Philosophy of Nature, 248 Z; Petry, 211. Böhme's Lucifer doctrine, and the "wrath" of God are explicitly discussed in the Böhme chapter of LHP III, 205-06; Werke 20, 108-10.

87. Walsh, "The Historical Dialectic of Spirit," 28.

[Vorstellen; "picture-thinking"] and not to the Concept, reduces [herabsetzten] the moments of the Concept to the level of representation, or carries representation over into the realm of thought" (Miller, 468; PG, 504).

Commentators, again, take Hegel as roundly rejecting Böhme here, but he goes on to pay Böhme indirect tribute two paragraphs later. Still speaking of the "myth" of Lucifer, Hegel remarks that picture-thinking cannot conceive of evil, of the negative, as a "moment" of God: "Representation takes the other aspect, evil, to be a happening alien to the divine being; to grasp it in the divine being as the wrath of God, this demands from representation, struggling against its limitations, its supreme and most strenuous effort, an effort which, since it lacks the Concept, remains fruitless" (Miller, 470; PG, 506). Böhme, of course, grasped evil as a moment of God, and Hegel knew this. Though his thought could not ultimately become Absolute Knowing because of its picture-thinking, it comes as close to Absolute Knowing as picture-thinking can.⁸⁸

88. Recall Hegel's letter to van Ghert, quoted earlier, in which he states that Böhme's endeavour "constitutes the most arduous struggle both to bring the deep speculative [content], which he holds in his intuition, into representation and so to master the element of representational [thinking] in order that the speculative content might be expressed in it. There remains so little that is constant and fixed in his work, because he feels everywhere the inadequacy of representation to what he is trying to achieve, and feels representation again overturned." For a repetition of the Böhme-Lucifer theme, see LPR III, 293-294 (Lectures of 1827); VPR III, 218.

(d) *Alchemical elements*

In truth, the concept of the negative as a moment in the positive is an old Hermetic theme. In alchemy, making gold involves breaking base metals down into their primal elements and then "raising them up" to the perfected metal-form of gold. Each metal was said to contain a "seed of gold" which could be made to sprout and blossom. At the same time, the alchemist was expected to purify himself, or the process would not work. In this we can see an analogy to the function of the Phenomenology itself. I have described it earlier as a "purification." In the phenomenological crucible, Spirit is separated from its impurities and, literally, perfected. As we have seen, the "seed" of Absolute Spirit is present in every flawed, imperfect form that Spirit takes. The work of this purification has happened, in part, through the historical process. But Hegel provides the final, secret ingredient necessary to synthesize Absolute Spirit. He has placed the historical forms of Spirit into his alembic and, through the fire of dialectic, has caused them to re-organize into a form which reveals the necessity within their apparent contingency.

As Ronald Gray writes of the alchemical process, "These very inferior metals . . . were to be transmuted in

the alchemical work into a God-like form."⁸⁹ Hegel has utilized the dark will of Desire--and the blinkered perspectives of myriad forms of Desire sublimated as modes of consciousness--in order to produce not a "God-like form," but God Himself. Hegel's "magical power that converts [the negative] into being" is beyond the dreams of Agrippa, Paracelsus, or even Goethe's Faust. Hegel is the World-Historical Alchemist. His product is the Philosopher's Stone or, as it was known to the Germans, der Stein der Weisen.

We may picture the result of the process as a pure, shining stone. Unlike the prima materia of traditional alchemy, though, it does not contain all things in potentia. Instead, all things have actuality by being contained within it. God or Spirit or the Absolute is actualized merely in the gaze of the alchemist and his pupils into this shining stone. But the "reflection" it presents them with is not that of their sensuous being, but that of their inner essence: the moments of the Idea itself. The legendary Philosopher's Stone was supposed to be able to reduce all things to their essence, if it were put into contact with them. Hegel's Stein der Weisen has this power as well: it causes the Idea to "shine forth" in Nature, as well as in human nature, and in human thought and institutions, and thus to reveal their inner essence.

89. Gray, 25.

The image of the Schädelstätte is found in some alchemical texts. The crucifixion is an image of the nigredo, the initial alchemical stage of putrefaction or death, from which comes (eventually) the philosopher's stone. Caput mortuum--"death's head"--was the term used by alchemists to denote the substance remaining after putrefaction or purification by fire has taken place. Significantly, it was symbolized by a skull. Caput Mortuum is a term actually employed by Hegel, as I shall discuss in the following chapter.

Alchemists like Heinrich Khunrath (1560-1605) identified Christ Himself with the philosopher's stone. In truth, the image of Golgotha at the end of the Phenomenology is a continuation of the "Bacchanalian revel" imagery which occurs early on in the text. Aside from the famous "Bacchanalian revel" passage, earlier I quoted another passage which contains an oblique reference to Dionysus: "the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself" (Miller, 19; PG, 26). Hegel's Phenomenology is a rite of initiation and an alchemical transmutation: the material (mundane mind or spirit) must be broken apart or sacrificed, in order to become the material for transmutation into a higher form.

In Faith and Knowledge (1802) Hegel writes that the "pure Concept" must "re-establish for philosophy the Idea of absolute freedom and along with it the absolute Passion, the speculative Good Friday in place of the historic Good Friday."⁹⁰ Mythically, Christ is equivalent to Dionysus (and Osiris), the God who benefits mankind through being sacrificed. Spirit must die, it must be dismembered, in order to attain Absolute Knowing and become Absolute Spirit. Karin Figala, in her article "Der alchemische Begriff des Caput Mortuum in der symbolischen Terminologie Hegels," writes that the crucifixion is an "Ursymbol of the alchemical process, of the 'whitening of the nigredo.' A primordial symbol of pre-Christian gnosis for the transformation of nigredo into albedo is the saga of Osiris's death and resurrection."⁹¹

(e) *The Foaming Chalice*

As I noted earlier, Hegel ends the Phenomenology with the famous image of the "foaming chalice." Spirit as displayed in the Phenomenology's "way of despair" constitutes "the recollection and the Golgotha [die

90. In G.W.F. Hegel, Faith and Knowledge, ed. and trans. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 191. German edition: Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 4, ed. Harmut Buchner and Otto Pöggler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), 414.

91. See Karin Figala, "Der alchemische Begriff des Caput Mortuum in der symbolischen Terminologie Hegels," Hegel-Studien 11 (1974): 141-151; 143-44. My translation. See Chapter Five for "caput mortuum."

Schädelstätte] of Absolute Spirit, the actuality, truth, and certainty of his throne, without which he would be lifeless and alone; only, 'from the chalice of this realm of spirits, foams for Him his own infinity'" (Miller, 493; PG, 531).⁹² Hegel has paraphrased Schiller's poem "Die Freundschaft" ("Friendship"; 1782). The last two lines of which read: "Aus dem Kelch des ganzen Seelenreiches, Schäumt ihm--die Unendlichkeit."⁹³ Hegel has revised these lines to read "Aus dem Kelche dieses Geisterreiches, schäumt ihm seine Unendlichkeit."

To understand the significance of the changes, one must look at the final stanza of Schiller's poem in its entirety:

Freundlos war der grosse Weltenmeister,
Fühlte Mangel--darum schuf er Geister,
Selge Spiegel seiner Seligkeit!--
Fand das höchste Wesen schon kein gleiches,
Aus dem Kelch des ganzen Seelenreiches
Schäumt ihm--die Unendlichkeit.

Which might be translated:

92. The "way of despair" (Weg der Verzweiflung) is mentioned at Miller, 49; PG, 60. It is a clear reference to the via dolorosa.

93. Friedrich Schiller, Sämtliche Werke, 4 vols., ed. Gergard Fricke and Herbert G. Göpfert with Herbert Stubenrauch, 6th ed. (Munich: Hanser, 1974-80), 1:93.

Friendless was the great World Master
 Felt a lack--thus he created spirits,
 Blessed mirrors of his bliss--
 Still found the highest being no likeness,
 From out of the chalice of the whole realm of the soul
 Foams for Him--infinity.⁹⁴

The imagery of the World Master creating "spirits" as a "mirror" calls to mind Böhme's doctrine of God's wisdom, which he depicts as a mirror and analyzes into the seven "source-spirits" (Quellgeister). Hegel's claim, as we have seen in connection with the "myth" of 1804-05, is that any developmental account of the "life of God" must understand Spirit as its origin and object. Hegel contends that this is the crucial component missing from Böhmean theosophy. Encountering a similar "myth" in Schiller's Die Freundschaft, Hegel thus identifies Schiller's created Geist (or, literally, Geister) with the soul of the World Master: "Seelenreiches" becomes "Geisterreiches." The final lines of the Phenomenology can thus be seen as a covert continuation of Hegel's dialogue with Böhmean theosophy.

There is a further irony--again pointing toward Böhme--in Hegel's use of Schiller's poem. Hegel must also reject Schiller's claim that "Still found the highest being no

94. Translation in Verene, 6.

likeness." In a Zusatz to one section of the Encyclopedia Logic Hegel states that, "the original calling of man, to be an image of God, can be realised only through cognition [Erkennen]" (EL § 24 Z-3; Geraets, 63). For Hegel, the "world master" must find an adequate likeness. Further, in the Preface to the second edition of the Encyclopedia (1827), Hegel speaks of Böhme as having "enlarged the basic import of religion, [taken] on its own account, to the universal Idea . . . [This was possible] because he took as his foundation [the thesis] that the spirit of man and all things else are created in the image of God--and, of course, of God as the Trinity . . . " (Geraets 15; Werke 8, 28).

Finally, Schiller writes that out of this "realm of the soul foams for Him--infinity," implying that infinity unfolds before God, as an external show. Hegel revises the last line of the poem to read "foams to him, his infinity [seine Unendlichkeit]." Spirit is now to be identified with the infinite. This must be understood in contrast to what Hegel means by a "bad infinity" (Schlechte Unendlichkeit), which is an infinity that stands opposed to what is finite as something external. Such opposition limits infinity, thus making it not infinite but finite. "Good infinity" comprehends finitude. Thus, Spirit does not face an infinity "foaming" out away from it; it is the

infinite. This, its true nature, has revealed itself through the Geisterreich which is the Phenomenology.⁹⁵

There is a yet another, still more interesting implication to Hegel's use of this passage. Consider the context in which it occurs. Hegel speaks of the "the recollection and the Golgotha of Absolute Spirit, the actuality, truth, and certainty of his throne, without which he would be lifeless and alone." The meaning of this imagery seems to be obvious: the way of Spirit to Absolute Knowing is likened to Christ's passion. But Hegel then immediately introduces his paraphrase of Schiller. In this context, the reference to the "Kelche" can only call to mind the image of the Holy Grail, the cup in which Christ's blood was supposed to have been captured.

According to tradition, the Holy Grail was also the cup of the last supper. When communion is taken in the Mass, the celebrants drink from the sort of chalice that the Grail was pictured as, and what they drink is, of course, wine representing (or become) Christ's blood.⁹⁶ Hegel's use of the imagery of the "Kelch" here extends the comparison of his doctrine to Christianity. In drinking from the communion cup we become symbolically "one" with God, imbued with the Holy Spirit. Hegel believes that he has actually realized this oneness in his Phenomenology.

95. My interpretation of these lines is based in part on that of Verene, 6-7.

96. I am thinking along the lines of the Lutheran interpretation of communion here.

For a philosopher like Hegel, who believes that at the end of time we rend and devour our God like the Titans did Dionysos, the cup of Christ's blood is a useful symbol for a dangerous idea.⁹⁷

The image of the Holy Grail was appropriated by Hermeticists, particularly by alchemists. In the Parzival of Wolfram von Eschenbach (c. 1170-1230)--the version of the Grail story with which Hegel was most likely familiar--the Grail appears not as a cup but as a stone. In the story, the hermit Trevrizent tells Parzival that the name of the Grail is Lapsit exillis.⁹⁸ Although this looks like Latin, it literally means nothing. Most scholars have thought it a mistake on Wolfram's part, and that he meant to write something else. Many suggestions have been made as to what that something else might be. It is generally agreed that lapsit is supposed to be lapis, stone. Julius Evola argues for lapis elixir, making an obvious connection with alchemy.⁹⁹

I find Emma Jung's suggestion of lapis exilis more plausible, however. The philosopher's stone was explicitly

97. As I noted in Chapter Two, Oetinger believed that the spilling of Christ's blood in the crucifixion was highly significant. For instance, he seems to have held that our "participation" in the life of Christ through holy communion is emblematic of the "taking up" of the true doctrine, transmitted through Christ, through which we may nurture our spiritual body and so work to actualize the divine spiritual concretion which is God. See R. Schneider, 123.

98. Parzival, IX. 469:7.

99. Evola, Grail, 153.

named lapis exilis in some works of Arnold of Villanova, born 1220. It is probable that the term is much older.¹⁰⁰ Exilis means "poor" or "mean." Jung notes that this points to a traditional feature of the philosopher's stone, which is that it is at one and the same time priceless, as well as the most common thing there is, "trodden underfoot in the street."¹⁰¹ She writes that the philosopher's stone is "a particle of God concealed in nature, an analogy to the God who, in Christ, came down to earth in a human body, subject to suffering. On the other hand, the 'cheapness' of the stone . . . alludes to the fact that every human being is its potential bearer, even its begetter."¹⁰²

Hegel finished the Phenomenology in great haste; according to legend, on the eve of the battle of Jena. When he looked for an image to end the book, what came to him was the crucifixion of Jesus on Golgotha--and then a chalice, the foaming chalice of Schiller. To repeat a quotation from the previous chapter, Donald Phillip Verene, writing of how images or symbolic forms occur to a thinker, notes that, "Archai come from nowhere. They come when needed and they come from nowhere. They are drawn forth from consciousness suddenly and without method, that is, without some set procedure. Consciousness turns to itself and suddenly has in its hands something of itself that it

100. Ibid., 149

101. Jung and Franz, 153.

102. Ibid., 157.

did not know was there in any explicit sense. This drawing forth of archai . . . is in fact recollecting in its primordial sense. It is Erinnerung."¹⁰³

Verene writes that Hegelian Erinnerung--or Er-innerung, as Hegel also writes it--strongly implies an "inwardizing of the subject."¹⁰⁴ Antoine Faivre, in a commentary on the Rosicrucian Chemical Wedding, makes the same observation: that "er-innern" means both "to remember" and "to go deeply into one's self."¹⁰⁵ In attempting to close the Phenomenology with an appropriate image, Hegel has indeed gone very deeply into himself.

Perhaps Hegel's inspiration to use Schiller's chalice in the context of the image of the crucifixion can only have seemed right to him because of its association with the Holy Grail, perhaps even the un-Chalice of Wolfram--the Grail as stone, the Stein der Weisen--and the whole constellation of perennial mystical and Hermetic ideas associated with it.

103. Verene, 24.

104. Ibid., 3.

105. Antoine Faivre, Access to Western Esotericism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 169.

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE KABBALISTIC TREE: THE SCIENCE OF LOGIC

"Once you have entered the magic circle the sorcerer
has drawn around himself you are lost."

--Eric Voegelin

"On Hegel: A Study in Sorcery"¹

1. The Project of Hegel's Logic

In 1808, Hegel became Professor of Propaedeutics and Headmaster of the Aegidien Gymnasium at Nuremberg. The position had been secured for him by his loyal friend Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer, a fellow Swabian who held the post of Senior Inspector of Schools. Hegel's life in Nuremberg was not entirely happy. Although it was there that he met and married Marie von Tucher and began raising a family, he was continually bedeviled by problems of the most mundane sort at the Gymnasium. At one point, Hegel was forced to occupy himself with the problem of securing toilets for the Gymnasium, which, until he arrived, had none. In a letter to Niethammer of February 12, 1809, Hegel remarks ruefully that, "This is a new dimension of public education, the importance of which I have just now

1. Eric Voegelin, "On Hegel: A Study in Sorcery," in The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Vol. 12, Published Essays, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 228.

discovered--so to speak, its hind side."² Still, Hegel found time to write his second book, the Science of Logic (Wissenschaft der Logik), published 1812-1816.

In this section, I shall set out some introductory remarks about the aims of the Logic and its relation to the rest of the system, before moving on in the following section to a more detailed account of the divisions within the Logic. On February 5, 1812, Hegel wrote to Niethammer:

Nine sheets of my Logic have been printed. Before Easter perhaps another twenty will be printed. What I can say about it for the time being is that these twenty-five to thirty [galley] sheets are only the first part, that they do not yet contain anything of what is usually called logic, that they constitute metaphysical or ontological logic: the first book is on Being, and the second on Essence, if there is still room for the second book in Part One. I am in it up to my ears. It is no mean feat in the first half year of one's marriage to write a thirty-sheet book of the most abstruse contents.³

Although Hegel seems to be speaking here exclusively about the first two divisions of the Logic, his remarks should give us an important clue as to just what the

2. Butler, 190; Hoffmeister #145; my italics.

3. Butler, 261; Hoffmeister #198; my italics.

project of the Logic is--an issue which has vexed contemporary writers. The Logic is metaphysics or ontology. Ontology is the study of what it means to be as such, whereas metaphysics is the study of the highest or truest being. Heideggerians hold that virtually all philosophers before Heidegger have "forgotten Being" by confusing ontology with metaphysics: they think that to talk about Being means to talk about some particular (if exalted) being, such as God. Hegel's Logic is both a metaphysics and an ontology. The Logic is an account of what it means to be, but it is simultaneously an account of the highest individual being. The Logic is an account of substance as such, but it is also an account of the highest individual substance.⁴ Just how this is the case will emerge in the course of my exposition of the Logic.

Hegel published two versions of his "Logic": the Science of Logic, mentioned above, as well as the so-called Encyclopedia Logic, the first book of his Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline (Enzyklopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse) (1817). The

4. It will emerge that Absolute Idea is only fully actual as Spirit. In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion (I, 142; VPR I, 56) Hegel states that "Spirit is in the most concrete sense. The absolute or highest being belongs to it." H.S. Harris writes that "The logic presents the divine life as an absolute Substance in which the essence (being, activity) is identical with the existence (becoming, passive product or expression). The substance is eternally as a process of coming-to-be." H.S. Harris, Hegel's Development Vol. II: Night Thoughts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 300.

Science of Logic is verbose and obscure. The Encyclopedia Logic is terse and obscure. The latter is a collection of numbered paragraphs which served as a lecture text for Hegel's classes in the Gymnasium in Nuremberg, and later in the universities of Heidelberg and Berlin. These paragraphs are extremely difficult to understand in isolation, and require Hegel's amplifying lecture remarks. Fortunately, many of these remarks were written down verbatim by Hegel's students and have been printed in subsequent editions of the Encyclopedia as the Zusätze. In the account which follows, I will be amalgamating Hegel's remarks in both versions of the Logic, for the simple reason that "the Logic" is a single, eidetic content which its discoverer, Hegel, elaborated in two versions. The differences between these two versions have to do mainly with presentation: e.g., certain transitions or categorial structures are elaborated more fully in the Science of Logic, whereas in the Encyclopedia they are simplified. In other words, the two texts do not differ in philosophical content, but only in their form of presentation. Except where I have indicated otherwise, I will use the term Logic to refer to both texts in general, and neither in particular.

Both versions of the Logic echo Hegel's remarks in the letter to Niethammer. On the initial page of the Preface to the first edition of the Science of Logic, Hegel implies

that he intends to provide Germany with its own metaphysics: "If it is remarkable when a nation has become indifferent to its constitutional theory, to its national sentiments, its ethical customs and virtues, it is certainly no less remarkable when a nation loses its metaphysics, when the spirit which contemplates its own pure essence is no longer a present reality in the life of the nation" (Miller, 25; WL I, 3).⁵ In the Introduction to the Science of Logic, Hegel contrasts his book to "former metaphysics" (Miller, 64; WL I, 50). In the Introduction to the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel writes that, "Speculative Logic contains the older logic and metaphysics; it preserves the same forms of thought, laws, objects, but it develops and transforms them with further categories" (EL § 9; Geraets, 33).

So why did Hegel call this metaphysics Logic? In fact, commentators rarely ask why Hegel selected the title that he did. The answer lies in the derivation of the term "logic" from the Greek logos. Rosenkranz reports that Hegel in his Jena years "loved . . . to present the creation of the universe as the utterance of the absolute Word, and the return of the universe into itself as the understanding of the Word, so that nature and history become the medium between the speaking and the

5. Hegel obviously blames Kant and his followers for bringing this situation about.

understanding of the Word--a medium which itself vanishes qua other-being."⁶

But I shall let Hegel speak for himself, in a series of quotations which will enable us to piece together an accurate account of the subject matter of the Logic.

In the Preface to the second edition (1832) of the Science of Logic, Hegel discusses the consummating idea of his Logic, the "Concept" (der Begriff) as follows: "This Concept is not sensuously intuited or represented; it is solely an object, a product and content of thinking, and is the absolute, self-subsistent thing [Sache], the logos, the reason of that which is, the truth of what we call things; it is least of all the logos which should be left outside the science of logic" (Miller, 39; WL I, 19). This passage implies that Hegel's "Doctrine of the Concept" will satisfy the claim of the science itself to be both metaphysics and ontology: it will give us the logos both as "absolute, self-subsistent object," and as the "reason of that which is, the truth of what we call things." Hegel's Absolute Idea (absolute Idee), as we shall see, is this logos.⁷

True to the spirit of Greek philosophy, Hegel's logos is objective thought. Hegel writes in the Encyclopedia

6. Karl Rosenkranz, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), 193. G.W.F. Hegel, System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit, trans. H.S. Harris and T.M. Knox (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), 265.

7. In the Philosophy of Nature Hegel states at one point " . . . the idea, i.e. the logos . . . " (PN I, 247, Z; Petry I, 205).

Logic that "thoughts can be called objective thoughts . . . Thus logic coincides with metaphysics, with the science of things grasped in thoughts that used to be taken to express the essentialities of things" (EL § 24; Geraets, 56).

Later in the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel writes that, "ideas are not just to be found in our heads, and the Idea is not at all something so impotent that whether it is realised or not depends upon our own sweet will; on the contrary, it is at once what is quite simply effective and actual as well" (EL § 142, Z; Geraets, 214). Hegel writes, further, that "It is not we who 'form' concepts, and in general the Concept should not be considered as something that has come to be at all" (EL § 163, Z; Geraets, 241).

Lecturing on one of the early paragraphs of the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel remarks that the subject matter of the Logic is truth (EL § 19 Z-1; Geraets, 46). Hegel amplifies this remark by adding that what thought thinks in the Logic is "what is eternal" (EL § 19 Z-2; Geraets, 47). This is then explained as being "the supersensible world" (EL § 19 Z-2, Geraets, 48). In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Hegel states that "Philosophy is no worldly wisdom, as it used to be called . . . It is not in fact a wisdom of the world but instead a cognitive knowledge of the nonworldly; it is not a cognition of external existence, of empirical determinate being and life, or of the formal universe, but rather cognition of

all that is eternal--of what God is and of what God's nature is as it manifests and develops itself" (LPR I, 117; VPR I, 33-34). In the Science of Logic, Hegel identifies the eternal with God (Miller, 78; WL I, 68). In the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel avers that both philosophy and religion hold that, "God and God alone is the truth" (EL § 1; Geraets, 24). In Hegel's lecture manuscript for the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion (1824), Hegel writes that "God is the one and only object of philosophy . . . " and that "philosophy is theology" (LPR I, 84; VPR I, 3-4). In a famous passage of the Science of Logic, Hegel states that the Logic "is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought. This realm is truth as it is without veil and in its own absolute nature. It can therefore be said that this content is the exposition of God as He is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite Spirit" (Miller, 50; WL I, 33-34).

On the basis of all of the foregoing, then, we are entitled to conclude that, for Hegel, The Eternal = Truth = logos = Absolute Idea = God, and that this is the subject matter of the Logic.⁸ Just exactly how Hegel can make this series of identifications remains to be seen. Against the tradition of "negative theology," as well as the tradition which claims in general that the human intellect is finite

8. In the Philosophy of Nature, Hegel states "that which is true, however, the Idea, Spirit, is eternal" (PN § 258; Petry I, 231).

and frail, Hegel holds that the Infinite and Eternal must be knowable. Hegel even claims, surprisingly, that views which stress man's finitude and God's unknowability are contrary to the Christian faith. In his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion he states, "I declare such a point of view to be directly opposed to the whole nature of the Christian religion, according to which we should know God cognitively, God's nature and essence, and should esteem this cognition above all else" (LPR I, 88; VPR I, 7).

In the same manuscript, after Hegel claims that philosophy is occupied with God alone--"philosophy is theology," he writes--Hegel then goes on to say that everyone already has a consciousness of God (LPR I, 85; VPR I, 4). This is another theme of Hegel's Logic. In the Preface to the second edition of the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel writes that "Religion is the mode, the type of consciousness, in which the truth is present for all men," but philosophy is something only a few take up and comprehend (Geraets, 11; Werke 8, 23). This does not mean that philosophers leave behind the concept of God: as we have seen, Hegel claims in the Logic that both religion and philosophy hold that God alone is the Truth. It simply means that religious devotion--ritual, worship, devotional literature, etc.--are for all men, whereas philosophy is only for a few.

In the very next sentence of the Preface, however, Hegel alludes to Homer and says that certain things, such as Truth, have two names, "one in the language of Gods, and the other on the tongues of us men . . . " (Geraets, 11; Werke 8, 23). The structure of Hegel's sentences suggests that he is saying that religion is to philosophy as the language of Gods is to the language of men. But this is not his meaning. As will become abundantly clear later on, Hegel regards the philosophers as semi-divine, "daimonic" beings. It is philosophy which is the language of Gods. Indeed, in a Zusatz to a later section of the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel states that, "the original calling of man, to be an image of God, can be realised only through cognition [Erkennen]" (EL § 24 Z-3; Geraets, 63). This is no innocent scriptural allusion. In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Hegel states that, "God is only in and for thought" (LPR I, 209; VPR I, 118).

In making such claims, Hegel is not simply attacking longstanding religious views about man's relationship to God, he is also opposing the Kantian philosophy. Hegel's objections to Kant are well-known, but seldom understood. Hegel's claim that we can know the thing-in-itself is one of the major reasons why so many "tough-minded" philosophers seem to regard him as slightly mad. In fact, Hegel's claim--for which the entire Logic serves as an argument--is tightly reasoned and built on Kant's own

premises. In the Science of Logic, Hegel writes that the critical philosophy holds that "we place our thoughts as a medium between ourselves and the objects, and that this medium instead of connecting us with the objects rather cuts us off from them" (Miller, 36; WL I, 15). Much later in the Logic, Hegel infers--as he does in many other places--that Kant's claim that the thing-in-itself is unknowable is equivalent to the claim that "reality lies absolutely outside the Concept . . ." (Miller, 593; WL III, 24).

Hegel fastens on to how Kant sometimes identifies the thing-in-itself with "the Unconditioned." For Hegel, only the Absolute is unconditioned, for it cannot be subsumed by any higher or wider category, or be made present in intuition. In the Logic he presents a system which articulates the conceptual moments of the Absolute, employing a method Kant to some degree anticipated, but never fully appreciated: dialectic. The moments of the Absolute are simultaneously categories of the real and categories of human thought. In fact, a superficial glance at the divisions of Hegel's Logic reveals that it is partly a re-working of Kant's Table of Judgements and Table of Categories. As Henry Allison has argued, Kant's categories are the conditions for the possibility of knowledge, and

conditions for the possibility of objects as such.⁹ Once this is understood, then the reasoning behind Hegel's claim to know the thing-in-itself becomes clear. For Hegel, the totality of conditions is itself the Unconditioned. These conditions form an organic totality, which can be known as a whole. Therefore, if the totality of these conditions is the Unconditioned, and the Unconditioned is the thing-in-itself, then we can know the thing-in-itself.

Furthermore, this Unconditioned--as an organic totality--is an individual. It is a unique, self-sufficient individual determined by nothing, but whose moments determine everything else. Thus, another name for the Unconditioned is God. Because its moments account for all being, it also constitutes the system of the World, or Reality as a whole. Finally, because the categories that make up the Unconditioned are, as I have said, also categories of human thought in all its forms, an account of the Unconditioned is equivalent to an account of the Mind or Soul. Thus, Hegel believes that he has, through a radically new method of thought, made Kant's noumenal realm present: what things-in-themselves are is the Absolute or Unconditioned, which is World, Soul, and God all wrapped up in one.

9. Henry Allison, Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense (New Haven: Yale, 1983), 10-13; 115-129.

However, the well-known "dual aspect" reading of Kant's phenomena-noumena distinction--as espoused by Paton, Allison, and others--might lead one to ask if Hegel's claim to know the thing in itself means that he thinks we can know or experience things as they are when they are not appearing to us. The answer to this question is, yes and no. We can know things as they are in themselves because the finite things that appear to us are themselves appearances of that infinite, eminently knowable being which is the Absolute or the Unconditioned. In other words, what individual things are in themselves is the Absolute, and, as already stated, we can know that. However, we cannot know the Absolute in the sense of making it intuitively or sensuously given. It is this sense of knowledge that Kant, in fact, has in mind when he denies knowledge of things-in-themselves. But Kant's claim that genuine knowledge must always involve intuition is simply arbitrary; it is the chink in Kant's critical armor.

As I have said, dialectic is the method Hegel believes can allow us to know God or the Absolute. In the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel makes it clear that dialectic is not simply a type of human thought. Instead, he claims that dialectic "is in general the principle of all motion, of all life, and of all activation [Betätigung] in the actual world" (EL § 81 Z-1; Geraets, 128-129). Later, Hegel states that dialectic "corresponds to the notion of

God's might" (EL § 81 Z-1, Geraets, 130). It would be a mistake, therefore, to think of dialectic merely as a "method" which is "applied" to a subject matter. Hegel believes that in his dialectic, form and content cannot be separated from each other. Thus, dialectic is Hegel's system, it is not an aspect of the system. As we shall see, Hegel believes that through the "purificatory initiation" of the Phenomenology, he has put himself in an altered state of consciousness, beyond the distinction between subject and object, whereupon the dialectic of the Logic simply flows out of him. As I said in Chapter Three, the philosopher is a vehicle of the muses: an oracle through which Spirit expresses itself, an automatic writer who passively watches the play of the dialectic as it develops on his page.

Nevertheless, dialectic is not simply a succession of categories, but a dynamic process. Some further discussion of the nature of this process is in order here. As is well-known, Hegel claims that there is a necessity to his dialectical transitions and a completeness to the system.

The necessity of Hegel's dialectical transitions is displayed in their triadic structure. It is frequently pointed out that this structure is often inadequately portrayed as a process of "thesis-antithesis-synthesis."¹⁰

10. See Gustav E. Müller, "The Hegel Legend of 'Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis'" in The Hegel Myths and Legends, ed. Jon Stewart (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press,

Some have even suggested that the "triadic form" of the dialectic is a mere Hegel "myth" and should be discarded. As we have seen, however, Hegel placed special emphasis on the triad as an element out of the philosophia perennis (recall his remark about Kant and the triadic form in the Preface to the Phenomenology). The triadic structure of dialectic may be described as follows: first there is an initial idea, which when analyzed or thought-through to the bottom suggests its opposite, or, at least, an opposing or contradictory idea; a third term then appears which "reconciles" these two. This reconciliation is accomplished in various ways, but frequently it involves a discovery of an underlying identity or commonality between the two terms initially thought to be so different. The real problem with the formula Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis is with the characterization of the third term as Synthesis. Nevertheless, in defense of this traditional interpretation there are some Hegelian third terms that do look like syntheses. For instance, in the Philosophy of Right, the third term to Family-Civil Society-State appears to take up and combine elements of the first two: the State, like Civil Society, is an association of autonomous individuals, but it cancels the external relation of those individuals in Civil Society and, like the Family, relates

1996). As is always pointed out, Hegel himself never uses these terms.

them internally through a shared foundation of values and interests.

The completeness of Hegel's system--especially the Logic--is achieved through its circularity. If the final category of the Logic (or of the system as a whole) leads back to the beginning, then everything that could be said has been said: nothing has been left out. H.S. Harris writes that, "The ideal of philosophy as a self-justifying circle is definitive for Hegel's concept of system from the beginning."¹¹ We have already seen the image of the circle appear in the Phenomenology. Speaking of the dialectic, Hegel says there that, "It is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual" (Miller, 10; PG, 14). Early in the Science of Logic, Hegel writes that, "The essential requirement for the science of logic is . . . that the whole of the science be within itself a circle in which the first is also the last and the last is also the first" (Miller, 71; WL I, 60). In the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel writes:

11. Harris, Night Thoughts, 235; Alexandre Kojève also makes the point that it is the circularity of the system that proves its completeness. See Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 93.

Each of the parts of philosophy is a philosophical whole, a circle that closes upon itself; but in each of them the philosophical Idea is in a particular determinacy or element. Every single circle also breaks through the restriction of its element as well, precisely because it is inwardly [the] totality, and it grounds a further sphere. The whole presents itself therefore as a circle of circles, each of which is a necessary moment, so that the system of its peculiar elements constitutes the whole idea--which equally appears in each single one of them [EL § 15; Geraets, 39].

The system is a circle of circles, and the Logic is one such circle.

An important question must be asked about Hegel's metaphor, however. If the Logic upon reaching its "final" category gives way to the Philosophy of Nature, then how can it be said to return to its beginning? The answer is that each part of the system--Logic-Nature-Spirit--constitutes a separate "domain." Each separate Hegelian science gives a complete speech about one of these domains. It is not "Absolute Idea" which leads to the Philosophy of Nature. Rather, it is the Logic as a whole which requires supplementation by the categories of Nature. Hegel writes in the Encyclopedia Logic that, "The Logic is the science

of the pure Idea, that is, of the Idea in the abstract element of thinking" (EL § 19; Geraets, 45). As abstract, the Idea is without full realization or expression, although it is fully intelligible in the "abstract element of thinking." As we will see, the Absolute Idea is presupposed in the beginning of the Logic--Being--and Absolute Idea is a return, of sorts, to Being. Hegel's circle of circles might best be understood as a chain: each link is a whole, and although one link touches another, it is not fastened to that other or permanently connected with it.¹²

In one of the Zusätze to an early paragraph in the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel states that

When . . . we consider the Logic as the system of pure thought-determinations [reinen Denkbestimmungen], the other philosophical sciences--the Philosophy of Nature, and the Philosophy of Spirit--appear, in contrast, as applied logic, so to speak, for the Logic is their animating soul. Thus, the concern of those other sciences is only to [re]cognise the logical forms in the shapes of nature and spirit, shapes that

12. I owe this metaphor of the chain to Donald Phillip Verene (Seminar on the Phenomenology of Spirit, Emory University, Fall 1996). The metaphor of the chain (Kette) also occurs in Oetinger: "Die Welt ist eine Kette." See Robert Schneider, Schellings und Hegels schwäbische Geistesahnen (Würzburg-Aumühle: Konrad Triltsch Verlag, 1938), 127.

are only a particular mode of expression of the forms of pure thinking [EL § 24 Z-2; Geraets, 58].

Hegel continues these remarks, in a manner which will shortly emerge as very important: "In this way the Logic is the all-animating spirit of all sciences, and the thought-determinations contained in the Logic are the pure spirits; they are what is most inward, but, at the same time, they are always on our lips, and consequently they seem to be something thoroughly well-known" (EL § 24 Z-2; Geraets, 59). Hegel is here referring to the idea, explored already in Chapter Three, that we always already know--implicitly--the content of philosophy.

Something further must be said, though, about the relation of the Logic to the whole system. At the end of his Introduction to the Encyclopedia Logic Hegel gives the structure of his system as follows:

- I. The Logic, the science of the Idea in and for itself.
- II. The Philosophy of Nature, as the science of the Idea in its otherness.
- III. The Philosophy of Spirit, as the Idea that returns into itself out of its otherness [EL § 18; Geraets, 42].

Much later in the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel states that, "The Idea is what is true in and for itself, the absolute unity of Concept and objectivity" (EL § 213; Geraets, 286). The "in itself" refers to the parts of the Logic which Hegel calls "objective logic"--Being and Essence--whereas the truth "for itself" is "subjective logic," the Concept (Miller, 63-64; WL I, 50-51). In the Logic, all the eidetic determinations of objects are explicated, and are shown to lead to an idea which reflects on itself or is self-referential--this is what Hegel means by the Idea being "for itself" or "subjective."

As we shall see, Absolute Idea is the abstract conception of self-thinking thought. In nature and in man, the Absolute Idea "strives" for realization in the world, and finds it only in the self-thinking thought of the philosopher who thinks the Hegelian system.

2. The Argument of the Logic

(a) *Prefatory Remarks*

Hegel's Logic is divided into three major divisions: the Doctrine of Being (die Lehre vom Sein), the Doctrine of Essence (die Lehre vom Wesen), and the Doctrine of the Concept (die Lehre vom Begriff). In the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel explains that Being involves thought "In its immediacy--the doctrine of the Concept in-itself" (EL § 83; Geraets, 133). Essence is thought "In its reflection and

mediation--the being-for-itself and shine [Schein] of the Concept" (ibid.). I have already mentioned that the doctrines of Being and Essence constitute "objective logic" for Hegel: they deal with determinations of objects. Finally, Concept is thought "In its being-returned-into-itself [Zurückgekehrtsein in sich selbst] and its developed being-with-itself [Beisichsein]--the Concept in-and for-itself" (ibid.). The following account of the Logic will be devoted primarily to explaining how this major triad works. A detailed account of all the categories and transitions in the Logic would, of course, require a book in itself.

First, a few remarks about the architectonic of Being-Essence-Concept are necessary. We have already seen that Hegel regards his Logic as subsuming the older metaphysics and logic. Indeed, the metaphysics, ontology, logic, and epistemology of older thinkers are encountered continually in the Logic, sublated within Hegel's system, usually without any attribution. Hermann Friedrich Wilhelm Hinrichs (1794-1861), probably the first follower of Hegel to teach the Hegelian system, presented the Logic to his students in historical form. The Doctrine of Being, Hinrichs said, essentially covers the same ground as the Pre-Socratics, Plato and Aristotle; Essence represents the "Cartesian turn" toward reflection, particularly as expressed by Leibniz; the Concept takes up and completes

the Kantian-Fichtean doctrine of the Transcendental Unity of Apperception or Transcendental Ego.¹³ This interpretation appears to be sound, and Hegel himself did not challenge it.

Further, just as Kant repeated the division Aesthetic-Analytic-Dialectic throughout all of his critical writings, so Hegel adheres to the division Being-Essence-Concept. Hegel does not explicitly use these terms in the divisions of the Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of Spirit; instead there is an analogy or correspondence between the major divisions of those works and the Logic. Each begins with a treatment of a kind of simple immediacy, followed by an introduction of reflection or relation between terms, followed by a division in which the first two elements are sublated and the subject matter of the science "returns into itself." Obviously, this is a highly abstract way of putting things, which can only be made intelligible through a discussion of the individual Hegelian sciences themselves.

It is important to note, however, that this division does not begin in the Logic: it is present already in the Phenomenology. As I stated in the preceding chapter, the Logic is simply the "recollection" of the categorial structures underlying Spirit. The Logic is the unconscious in-itself of Spirit become for-itself. "Consciousness" in

13. See Butler, editorial remark, Hegel: The Letters, 484.

the Phenomenology is the level of "immediacy." This is most apparent in "Sense-Certainty," which deals with bare sensory givenness. The categories of the "Doctrine of Being" in the Logic are the categories of sensory givenness, or what we might call "perceptual thinking" (Hegel is one of the fathers of the "theory-laden" view of perception). Essence in the Logic corresponds to "Self-Consciousness" in the Phenomenology, because it is a logic or ontology of relations. Finally, the Concept in the Logic corresponds to "C." in the Phenomenology: the categories of the Concept prove the underlying identity of Reason, Spirit, and God (the object of Religion). The Absolute Idea is the true object of Absolute Knowing, which was only prefigured or anticipated at the end of the Phenomenology.

To begin with the Logic, indeed, is to begin with Absolute Knowing. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the system of Hegelian Science finally realizes the aim of Spirit to completely transform its object, to confront only itself. It does this by developing an account of Substance which is simultaneously Subject. This is not accomplished in the "Absolute Knowing" section of the Phenomenology, however, but only in the system Logic-Nature-Spirit. What has occurred at the end of the Phenomenology is merely a preparedness to receive the Lehre of the Absolute. As I have said, the Phenomenology is a kind of "purificatory

initiation," and what we are purified of is false standpoints toward otherness. In Absolute Knowing, the mind has raised itself to a level at which the self-other or subject-object distinction is simply transcended, or, more accurately, suspended.

An analogy may be helpful here. Imagine for a moment that the Absolute and all its moments could be "transmitted" like a radio or television signal. In the Phenomenology we are hunting around the dial for wisdom or the speech of the Absolute, but every channel is occupied by broadcasts that merely pretend to wisdom. One might be inclined to stop at one of these broadcasts and make some sort of beginning with it, re-write its scripts, as it were, if only in our minds, to reach true wisdom. But each turns out to be a "vast wasteland" in itself. Then we happen to discover a station that is broadcasting nothing at all--but it a very special kind of nothing which, when meditated upon, turns out to be a strange sort of "determinate nothing," and an inroad to Wisdom. At the end of the Phenomenology we have merely tuned into this station. In the Logic we are now listening to its "broadcasts."

Hegel's conception of Absolute Knowing is reminiscent of the ideas of the German mystic Valentin Weigel (discussed in Chapter One). Weigel held that the mental state necessary to achieve knowledge of God involves pure

consciousness or self-knowing, not a knowledge of particular things. In other words, it involves a getting-beyond the "opposition of consciousness," the subject-object distinction. In doing so, mind becomes absolutely passive--but at the same time absolutely active, for this type of knowledge is precisely God's knowledge (Weigel conceives God as the "Nothing and All"). So, the mystic does not come to know God but to become God's knowing.

The Logic is, in effect, a transcendental meditation, and what has been transcended is the subject-object distinction. At the end of the Logic, however, we will move from the cancellation of subject and object to their sublation: Absolute Idea is both subject and object.¹⁴ There is one important respect, however, in which the simile of the radio signal is inadequate: because there is no distinction between form and content, or method and content, in the system, the broadcasts of the Absolute Station and the act of turning to the station are really one: in other words, there is no distinction between Absolute Knowing and an "object" known in Absolute Knowing. This follows immediately if one simply keeps squarely in mind the fact that the subject-object distinction really is cancelled in Absolute Knowing. There is no "knower" (or "knowing") and "known" here.

14. See Harris, Night Thoughts, 33.

(b) *Being*

As is well known, Hegel begins the Logic with the category "Being" (the first category of the "Doctrine of Being"). But this is not the first object or category "known" by "Absolute Knowing." Instead, Being is Absolute Knowing. Having cancelled the knower-known distinction, Absolute Knowing is, paradoxically, not really a type of knowing, or a property or activity of a knower at all. In reaching and realizing Absolute Knowing we do not "know" anything. Instead, we "bring about" or, perhaps, "tap into" a completely unique entity, a pure immediacy which is neither subjective nor objective, but which will--through the self-development of the dialectic--mediate itself and reveal itself to be both subjective and objective. Hegel makes this point about the identity of Absolute Knowing and Being in the Science of Logic through a reference to Indian philosophy:

With this wholly abstract purity of continuity, that is, indeterminateness and vacuity of conception, it is indifferent whether this abstraction is called space, pure intuiting, or pure thinking; it is altogether the same as what the Indian calls Brahma, when for years on end, physically motionless and equally unmoved in sensation, conception, fantasy, desire and so on, looking only at the tip of his nose, he says inwardly

only Om, Om, Om, or else nothing at all. This dull, empty consciousness, understood as consciousness, is--
being [Miller, 97; WL I, 89].

The Logic begins with "pure Being" (reines Sein). This is not a "name" for the immediacy of Absolute Knowing, or even an initial development or transformation of this immediacy. Instead, as I have said, it is this immediacy. Earlier in the Science of Logic, he writes, "Pure knowing . . . has sublated all reference to an other and to mediation; it is without any distinction and as thus distinctionless, ceases itself to be knowledge; what is present is only simple immediacy [einfache Unmittelbarkeit]. Simple immediacy is itself an expression of reflection and contains a reference to its distinction from what is mediated. This simple immediacy, therefore, in its true expression, is pure being" (Miller, 69; WL I, 58). This pure being, which is also pure or absolute "knowing," appears also at the end of the Logic, in a transformed state, as the Absolute Idea, which, as I have already said, is thought directed on thought. Thus, the "Absolute Knowing" of the end of the Phenomenology and the beginning of the Logic may be said to be a psychological depiction of the transcendence of the subject-object distinction, whereas the Absolute Idea at the end of the

Logic is a pure eidetic, non-psychological expression of the sublation of subject-object.

Absolute Knowing = Pure Being may become more intelligible if we look at the way in which Hegel used the concept of Aether to express this idea in his earlier writings. In Hegel's notes and lectures from the Jena period, Aether figures very prominently, particularly with respect to the transition from Logic to the Philosophy of Nature. In his later work, Hegel employed the concept much less frequently, but it does occur in the Phenomenology.¹⁵ In the Preface, Hegel writes, "Pure self-recognition in absolute otherness, this Aether as such, is the ground and soil of Science or knowledge in general. The beginning of philosophy presupposes or requires that consciousness should dwell in this element" (Miller, 14; PG, 19). Thus, Hegel equates immediacy with the Aether. As I said in Chapter Three, the Absolute of the Logic is to be conceived as an "aetherial body." In Hegel's Philosophy of Nature of 1803-4 he writes that the "speaking of the Aether with itself is its reality . . . What it utters is itself, what speaks is itself, and that to which it speaks is again itself."¹⁶ The Absolute Idea is this speaking of the Aether with itself: the "return into itself" of the

15. H.S. Harris writes, "In his mature philosophy Hegel dropped all overt reference to the aether in the transition from Logic to nature; we hear only about 'the Idea letting itself go.'" The key word here is overt. Ibid., 303.

16. Quoted in Ibid., 243.

aetherial beginning point of the Logic in pure thought-immediacy. This thought-immediacy is what Hegel attempts to express, rather inadequately, as "Absolute Knowing." As we have seen with respect to Hegel's use of logos, this thought-immediacy is in some sense "objective." True, immediacy--or Pure Being--is beyond the subject-object distinction, but to call it "objective" here is merely to assert its reality. The term "Aether" is useful because it gives us something else to call this mysterious, non-subjective, non-objective, thought-immediacy which Hegel names Pure Being.

Furthermore, this immediacy = Pure Being = Aether is conceived by Hegel as infinite. Human consciousness, as the vehicle for the dialectical self-development of the Absolute Idea out of the Aether, is infinite as well. In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Hegel states that, "In thinking, I raise myself above all that is finite to the Absolute and am infinite consciousness, while at the same time I am finite self-consciousness, indeed to the full extent of my empirical condition" (LPR I, 212; VPR I, 120). Hegel here employs a distinction akin to Kant's noumenal and phenomenal selves or Rousseau's general and particular wills: as philosopher, I am merely a stand-in for an absolute self (Spirit) which "thinks" thoughts which have no real dependence on my individual, finite ego. Again, we see an affinity to Eastern thought: the way to

enlightenment consists in a letting-go of the ego and a meditation on the pure nothingness (which, as we shall see, is Pure Being) beyond subject and object.¹⁷

The infinitude of immediacy = Being means for Hegel that it is undetermined or indeterminate. Hence, Hegel begins his account of Pure Being by writing "Being, pure being, without any further determination. In its indeterminate immediacy it is equal only to itself" (Miller, 82; WL I, 71). Pure Being is empty and indeterminate. Absolute Idea, on the other hand, is indeterminate insofar as it contains all determinations within itself: there is nothing outside it to determine it, so it is therefore indeterminate. It is a true infinite (an unlimited being).¹⁸ Thus, as might be expected, Absolute Idea is anticipated in Being, in exactly the same way that Absolute Knowing in the Phenomenology is anticipated in Sense-Certainty.¹⁹

17. Indeed, Hegel's characterization in the Encyclopedia Logic of the purpose of philosophy is strikingly like Buddhism or Taoism: "philosophy is in fact the very discipline that aims at liberating man from an infinite crowd of finite purposes and intentions and at making him indifferent with regard to them, so that it is all the same whether [my house, my fortune, the air to breathe, this city, the sun, the law, the spirit, God, are or are not]" (EL § 88; Geraets, 141).

18. In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Hegel states that "God is the very being who finitizes Himself, who posits determinations within Himself" (LPR I, 307; VPR I, 212).

19. See G.R.G. Mure, A Study of Hegel's Logic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), 40.

Famously, Hegel argues that Being is identical to Nothing. He explains himself clearly in a Zusatz to the Encyclopedia Logic: "when we consider the entire world, and say simply that everything is, and nothing further, we leave out everything determinate, and, in consequence, have only absolute emptiness instead of absolute fullness. The same applies to the definition of God as mere being. Against it there stands, with equal justification, the definition of the Buddhists that God is nothing--from which it follows that man becomes God by annihilating himself" (EL § 87, Z; Geraets, 141). Being-as-such is a category totally empty of all determination, for it must prescind from all particular or individual things or qualities. But what difference is there then, Hegel asks, between Being and Nothing? He writes in the Science of Logic, "Let those who insist that being and nothing are different tackle the problem of stating in what the difference consists" (Miller, 92; WL I, 83).

Though Being and Nothing turn out to be equivalent, the mind simply refuses to identify the two: we still sense some ineffable difference between them. In the tension between Being and Nothing is Becoming. Becoming is movement from Nothing (or Not-Being) into Being--as when a man who is not a musician, learns to play an instrument and thereby is a musician. Or it is a passage from Being to Nothing--as when a man who was a musician, now forgets or

loses his skill, and becomes no longer musical. Hegel writes in the Science of Logic that, "there is nothing which is not an intermediate state between being and nothing" (Miller, 105; WL I, 98).

Every category that succeeds an initial Hegelian category is an amplification or supplementation of what comes first. Thus, everything after Being in some sense expands upon what it means "to be" (this is the sense in which the Logic is ontology). Becoming, then, is a more adequate expression of what it means to be (it is Hegel's "Heraclitean moment"). Hegel states this clearly in a Zusatz to the Encyclopedia Logic: "If we speak of the concept of being, this can only consist in becoming, for as being it is the empty nothing, but as the latter it is empty being. So, in being we have nothing, and in nothing being; but this being which abides with itself in nothing is becoming" (EL § 88, Z; Geraets, 144).

The triad Being-Nothing-Becoming is the most famous part of Hegel's Logic (and all that many philosophers know of it). The triad occurs in the first of three divisions Hegel makes within the Doctrine of Being: Quality (Qualität). (The other divisions are Quantity [Quantität] and Measure [Das Mass].) In the Preface to the Phenomenology Hegel writes, "When I say 'quality,' I am saying simple determinateness; it is by quality that one existence is distinguished from another, or is an

existence; it is for itself, or it subsists through this simple oneness with itself" (Miller, 33; PG, 41). Thus, the Doctrine of Being begins by considering "objectivity" in terms of the categories relative to the qualitative nature of things. From Becoming, Hegel derives Being-There (Dasein), which has the sense of something or Determinate Being (Miller's term). A being is there, exists, is something, is determinate, through its quality or qualities.

Determinate Being is finite being, and finite being naturally calls to mind the possibility of infinite being. Hegel writes in the Science of Logic, in fact, that "finitude is only as a transcending of itself" (Miller, 145; WL I, 145). Shortly thereafter, he writes that "the truth of the finite is rather its ideality" (EL § 95; Geraets, 152).²⁰ In this section, Hegel introduces his famous distinction between genuine (wahrhafte) and spurious or bad infinity (schlechte Unendlichkeit). Bad infinity is the infinity which goes on and on and on, composed of a series of externally related items which succeed one another without end. This is the infinity of the Understanding, for it is generated simply by a negation: infinity is simply the not finite, the unending. This infinity is false, for in standing opposed to the finite it

20. In the Science of Logic, Hegel writes that, "The proposition that the finite is ideal [ideell] constitutes idealism" (Miller, 154; WL I, 156).

is limited by the finite and thus it cannot be infinite. Genuine infinity is not a mere negation of the finite, but is instead an infinity that contains the finite.

A being is what it is through possessing Quality, but it always possesses Quality in some definite degree. Hence, being is determined also by Quantity. Everything that is being-there (determinate being), is a qualitative quantum, possessing discrete and continuous magnitudes. Hegel states that, "Quantum is the way that quality is there [ist das Dasein] . . . " (EL § 101, Z; Geraets, 161). Nevertheless, qualities may not exist in any quantity. Thus, a man may not be so tall as to bump his head on the moon and still be considered a man. Something must determine a quantitative range in which the qualities of something can exist. This notion of a limit to quantity leads us to the final division of Being, Measure. The realization of the necessity of Measure points beyond Being to Essence, to the "nature" of something which must determine its limits. As Hegel puts it in the Encyclopedia Logic, "essence is being as shining within itself [als Scheinen in sich selbst]" (EL § 112; Geraets, 175).

(c) *Essence*

The categories of Being have to do with the givenness of things. Beings first show themselves as units of quality, existing in certain specifiable quantitative

relationships. In Measure, however, the categories of Being have now gone beyond themselves, to what is beyond sense or givenness. In Essence, an appearance-reality distinction is introduced. This paves the way for Hegel's ultimate understanding of reality as an expression of the Absolute Idea. The stage for the Absolute has been set. We are being prepared for a reality, a substance, that exists beyond appearance. Hegel states that, "when we say further that all things have an essence, what we mean is that they are not truly what they immediately show themselves to be" (EL § 112, Z; Geraets, 176). Whereas Being is immediate, Essence is relational. In Essence we cover the categories in terms of which the thing is to be related to itself, where the itself is thought as something other than what is given in sense awareness. Hegel states in the Encyclopedia Logic, "Because the One Concept is what is substantial in everything, the same determinations occur in the development of Essence as in the development of being--but they occur in reflected form" (EL § 113; Geraets, 179).

In the Science of Logic, Hegel writes that "The truth of being is essence" (Miller, 389; WL II, 3). He maintains that this fact is discernible in the structure of the German language: the past participle of sein is gewesen, which contains Wesen, Essence (Ibid.). As is well known--particularly with respect to his theory of history--

something is fully knowable as what it is for Hegel only when it is over: "the Owl of Minerva takes flight only at dusk" (PR, 28; Knox, 13). Only when being, Sein, is "over" do we know what it is: Wesen. In the Science of Logic, Hegel divides his Doctrine of Essence into Essence as Reflection into Self (Das Wesen als Reflexion in ihm Selbst), Appearance (Die Erscheinung), and Actuality (Die Wirklichkeit). (In the Encyclopedia Logic the first division is entitled Essence as Ground of Existence, Das Wesen als Grund der Existenz.)

In his discussion of Measure in the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel states that, "We can also consider measure as a definition of the Absolute, and it has been said accordingly that God is the measure of all things" (EL § 107; Geraets, 170). (Recall from Chapter Three that all the categories of the Logic are "provisional definitions" of the Absolute or God.) Similarly, Hegel treats Essence as a definition of God, and states that "God is not merely an essence and not even merely the highest essence either. He is the essence" (EL § 112, Z; Geraets, 177). (Not for the first time in the Logic, Hegel appears to be fully cognizant of the distinction Heidegger later dubbed the "ontological difference.")

As I have said, Essence as the "inner reality" of things is a prefiguration of the Absolute Idea. I have already quoted Hegel saying that "the One Concept is what

is substantial in everything . . . " (EL § 114; Geraets, 179). In explicating what he means by Ground, Hegel writes that, "It is the Concept that will soon show itself to be a content of this kind, one that is determinate in and for itself, and hence acts on its own . . . " (EL § 121, Z; Geraets, 190). Early in the Science of Logic, Hegel writes that the "result [Resultat]" of the Logic "appears as the absolute ground . . . " (Miller, 72; WL I, 61).

The introduction of a distinction between appearance and reality obviously calls to mind Kant, and Hegel vigorously attacks Kant on this issue. He states in the Encyclopedia Logic that

when we say of something that it is 'only' appearance, this can be misunderstood as meaning that (in comparison with this thing that only appears) what is . . . is something higher. In fact the situation is precisely the reverse: appearance is higher than mere being. Appearance is precisely the truth of being and a richer determination than the latter, because it contains the moments of inward reflexion and reflexion-into-another united within it, whereas being or immediacy is still what is one-sidedly without relation, and seems to rest upon itself alone [EL § 131, Z; Geraets, 200].

In light of what I have already said, this can only seem puzzling. After all, the Doctrine of Being dealt with Being as the immediately given, so doesn't Hegel identify Being and Appearance? In fact, Hegel is quite clear that Appearance is a category of Essence: "Essence therefore is not behind or beyond appearance, but since the essence is what exists, existence is appearance" (EL § 131; Geraets, 199). As we have seen, the true essence of a finite object is the Whole itself: what a finite thing is, is the Absolute Idea itself. Finite things qua finite appear as self-overcoming: they immediately suggest the infinite. At the basic level of Being, this appearance of the infinite does not take place. Paradoxically, Being, the level of givenness, is the most abstract kind of experience there is. It can thus easily be seen how Appearance is a higher category than Being. In fact, Appearance is a more adequate approximation to what we mean when we speak of the true being of things. Thus, Kant is simply confused. True being--what things really are--does not lie beyond appearance, it is given in appearance.²¹

Hegel states that, "the true situation is that the things of which we have immediate knowledge are mere appearances, not only for us, but also in-themselves, and

21. Charles Taylor writes that Hegel's concept of appearance is "the exact opposite of Kant's. Instead of pointing by contrast to the essential hiddenness of the transcendental real, it rather expresses the essential manifest-ness of all reality." Taylor, Hegel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 274.

that the proper determination of these things, which are in this sense 'finite,' consists in having the ground of their being not within themselves but in the universal divine Idea. This interpretation must also be called idealism, but, as distinct from the subjective idealism of the Critical Philosophy, it is absolute idealism" (EL § 45, Z; Geraets, 88-89). Thus, Hegel holds to a two-tiered doctrine of appearance. The finite things of experience appear to me, as when I turn my head and look at the stack of books to my right. What these things are in themselves, however, is also appearance, the appearance of the Absolute, of which the finite thing is merely "some side or other of the Idea" (EL § 213; Geraets, 287). Contra Kant, we can know this thing-in-itself of which the finite thing is itself appearance; i.e., we can know the Absolute Idea, as the Logic demonstrates.

The Doctrine of Essence ends with the category of Actuality. One is, of course, reminded of Aristotle's actuality (energeia or entelecheia). Actuality for Aristotle has to do with the form or function which makes something what it is. In functioning as its nature intends it, a thing is "realizing" its actuality. The Unmoved Mover is a "pure actuality." It is an entity which is pure form; fully realized and complete, containing its end within itself. Although it is timeless or eternal, the Unmoved Mover is also dynamic and active, because form

equals function. We will see that Hegel's Absolute Idea, the culmination of the Doctrine of the Concept, and of the Logic as a whole, conforms exactly to the criteria of Aristotelian substance.

(d) Concept

In both the Science of Logic and the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel refers to the Concept as the unity of Being and Essence. In the Science of Logic, he writes that, "the Concept is to be regarded in the first instance simply as the third to being and essence, to the immediate and to reflection. Being and essence are so far the moments of its becoming; but it is their foundation and truth as the identity in which they are submerged and contained. They are contained in it because it is their result, but no longer as being and essence" (Miller, 577; WL III, 5). In Aristotelian terms, taking Concept as an actuality, it is easy to see how it is a unity of Being and Essence. Concept (or Absolute Idea) is "formal" and indeed it is the "essence" of all things. Hegel writes, "The concept . . . is the substance of the thing, like the seed from which the whole tree unfolds" (LPR I, 175; VPR I, 83). At the same time, however, it does not exist simply in relation to others, but is complete and sufficient unto itself (the relation of the Absolute Idea to nature will be explored shortly).

This "Aristotelian" interpretation of the Concept is amply confirmed by Hegel's own words. In the Encyclopedia Logic Hegel writes, "we do not usually understand by an 'object' merely something that is abstractly, or an existing thing, or something-actual in general, but something- independent, that is concrete and complete within itself; this completeness is the totality of the Concept" (EL § 193; Geraets, 268). In introducing the Absolute Idea in the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel states that, "Up to this point the Idea in its development through its various stages has been our object; but from now on, the Idea is its own object. This is the noesis noeseos [thought thinking thought], which was already called the highest form of the Idea by Aristotle" (EL § 236, Z; Geraets, 303).

The consummation of the Logic is thought thinking itself, because it represents the idea of the Idea: the idea of the totality of all the thought-determinations of the Logic. There is no distinction, however, between this totality and the idea of the totality, for the idea (in fact, the Idea) is itself the totality qua system--as opposed to mere collection. Of course, there is an obvious difference between a self-referential idea and a thinking which thinks about thinking. It seems as if Hegel has confused these two. Thinking, of course, requires a thinker, but, according to some philosophers, an idea can

exist without anyone thinking it. Hegel's position, in fact, is that the Absolute Idea is an eternal, formal being, and at the same time an eidetic prefiguration or anticipation of an actual thinking that thinks itself. Explaining the meaning of Hegel's Concept, Errol E. Harris writes that, "an actuality, reflecting itself in itself, is precisely the description of a conscious being . . . "22

The Absolute Idea does represent a system of pure ideas, complete unto itself. It requires no other category or concept to complete it. However, the system as a whole is deficient because logical or eidetic being is itself deficient. On its own, logic (or the logos) is formal and one-dimensional. To be fully realized, the Idea must "express itself" in the world of space and time. In other words, for Absolute Idea to become truly Absolute, it cannot abide simply in the transcendent realm of ideas: it must become "embodied."²³ This occurs when Absolute Idea becomes actual in the world through an embodied thought which reflects on itself.²⁴ Such a thought is philosophy.

22. E.E. Harris, An Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel (New York: University Press of America, 1983), 209.

23. Hegel's assumption is that a God who does not express Himself in the world is merely "implicit," an sich. That this must involve--as we shall see--God's incarnation in a particular earthly form (Objective and Absolute Spirit) is simply an assumption on Hegel's part. I want to suggest that this peculiar assumption can only be explained in terms of the influence on Hegel of the Oetingerite doctrine of Geistlichkeit, which was well-known to Schelling and to all Swabian intellectuals of a speculative disposition.

24. Hegel states in the Philosophy of Spirit that with Spirit we are concerned "with the most concrete and developed form attained in the self-actualization of the

We have seen in our examination of the Phenomenology and Logic that Hegel has generated his system through reflection on the nature of consciousness in all its forms. He has realized the ancient ideal of philosophy, "Know Thyself." This achievement in individual human thinkers constitutes the realization of the Absolute Idea in the world. Hegel writes in an 1819 letter to Hinrichs that, "Comprehension of the Absolute is thus the Absolute's comprehension of itself, just as theology--admittedly theology more as it once was than as it now is--has always expressed this same self-comprehension."²⁵

Earlier I said much about how for Hegel the object of philosophy is God. Hegel identifies God with the Absolute Idea, just as Aristotle identified God with self-thinking thought. However, if this is the case, if God = Absolute Idea, it follows that Hegel must hold that God is merely formal and irreal. Earlier I quoted Hegel stating that the Logic "is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought. This realm is truth as it is without veil and in its own absolute nature. It can therefore be said that this content is the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite Spirit" (Miller, 50; WL I, 33-34). God "in his eternal essence," then, is deficient. Hegel states

Idea" (PS § 377, Z; Petry I, 3). And later: "Spirit is the actualized Concept which is for itself and has itself for object" (PS § 382, Z; Petry I, 49).

25. Butler, 478; Hoffmeister #357.

in the Philosophy of Nature, "God as an abstraction is not the true God; His truth is the positing of His other, the living process, the world, which is his Son when it is comprehended in its divine form" (PN § 246, Z; Petry I, 204). If the Absolute Idea is the conceptual "anticipation" of the embodied self-thinking thought of the philosopher, then it is the philosopher who "realizes" God in the world, who makes God truly real, concrete, and absolute.

Contra Kojève and Voegelin, this does not mean that Hegel thinks that he is God. As I noted earlier, in philosophy Hegel thinks that we raise ourselves to infinite consciousness, but the individual ego is excluded from this act, and indeed may even hinder us in our efforts to achieve an impersonal wisdom. It is only insofar as we identify ourselves with Spirit as such that we in any way "share in" the divine. G.W.F. Hegel the particular individual, with his own history, his liking for coffee and wine, his absentmindedness, his petty and spiteful side, and so on, is not God. Hegel can be said to be God only insofar as he is a mere stand-in for Spirit.²⁶

26. Hegel writes in the Science of Logic that "The Concept, when it has developed into a concrete existence that is itself free, is none other than the I or pure self-consciousness" (Miller, 583; WL III, 12). In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Hegel states that "Since we call the Absolute Concept the divine nature, the idea of Spirit is to be the unity of divine and human nature. Humanity has arrived at this intuition. But the divine nature is itself only this, to be Absolute Spirit; hence precisely the unity of divine and human nature is itself

Spirit is a necessary moment in God's becoming fully realized in the world--in Absolute Idea's becoming Absolute simpliciter.²⁷ To express Hegel's theory of the Absolute Idea achieving realization in the world, it would seem that he need only have written the Phenomenology of Spirit, the Logic, and the Philosophy of Spirit.²⁸ Hegel, however, also insists on including the Philosophy of Nature as a distinct branch of Science. The Philosophy of Nature covers the fundamental categories pertaining to the entire natural world, excluding mankind, or Spirit. Spirit, for Hegel, is literally supernatural. But if Idea does not come to actual self-consciousness through nature, then why does Hegel include a Philosophy of Nature?

The answer, in part is that much of the Philosophy of Nature pertains to human beings insofar as they are physical, organic systems. A complete account of Spirit, then--a complete self-knowledge--must include these

Absolute Spirit" (LPR III, 66; VPR III, 6). Characterizing Hegel's position, H.S. Harris writes that "the working structure of the finite individual mind is an 'image of God' . . . " (Night Thoughts, 37).

27. In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Hegel states that "God is the absolute substance. If we cling to this declaration in its abstract form, then it is certainly Spinozism or pantheism. But the fact that God is substance does not exclude subjectivity, for substance as such is not yet at all distinguishd from subjectivity. That God is substance is part of the presupposition we have made that God is Spirit, Absolute Spirit, eternally simple Spirit, being essentially present to itself" (LPR I, 370; VPR I, 269).

28. Among other things, as I explained in the last chapter, the Phenomenology is different from the Philosophy of Spirit in possessing an historical dimension.

elements. But this is not Hegel's primary consideration. Hegel's aim is to work out a developmental account of reality as a whole, in terms of which everything is significant or intelligible. The telos of the universe is the Absolute Idea's realization in the world through the speculative activity of the philosopher, which is achieved through a long historical process. The non-human cannot, however, drop out of this picture as unintelligible. To explain non-human physical reality, therefore, Hegel adopts, again, a quasi-Aristotelian standpoint and claims that in some sense all physical and organic reality is intelligible in terms of its "approximation" to the self-related self-sufficiency of the Absolute Idea, or self-thinking thought. Hegel does not maintain--in a genuinely Aristotelian fashion--that all things "strive" to "imitate" the Absolute Idea. Instead, he simply holds that there are degrees of reality in the natural world, the highest of which, organic being, is a kind of unconscious, physical approximation to the Idea.

I will deal with Hegel's Philosophy of Nature much more fully in the following chapter. However, something more must be said here about the notorious transition from Logic to Nature. Hegel writes in the Science of Logic that, "the Idea freely releases itself in its absolute self-sufficiency and stasis" (die Idee sich selbst frei entlässt, ihrer absolut sicher und in sich ruhend) (Miller,

843; WL III, 305). The Encyclopedia Logic is only slightly more helpful: "The absolute freedom of the Idea . . . is not that it merely passes over into life, nor that it lets life shine within itself as finite cognition, but that, in the absolute truth of itself, it resolves to release out of itself into freedom the moment of its particularity or of the initial determining and otherness, [i.e.,] the immediate Idea as its reflexion, or itself as Nature" (EL § 244; Geraets, 307).

This concept of "free release" is obviously patterned on the traditional Christian idea that God creates the world as an unnecessitated act of generosity. (It also calls to mind Neo-Platonic emanation.) However, Hegel is a heretic because he holds the view that an abstract and transcendent God is deficient. Thus, Idea must "give rise to" nature. Because the categories of the Logic are complete, and thus a "category" of nature is not required to supplement Absolute Idea, and because no physical mechanism acts on Idea to "produce" Nature, Idea must be said to "freely" release itself. But does this make sense? Exactly what work does Idea do in bringing about or sustaining nature? What is the "itself" that is freely released?

Earlier I quoted a passage from one of the Zusätze to the Encyclopedia Logic, in which Hegel states that

When . . . we consider the Logic as the system of pure thought-determinations [reinen Denkbestimmungen], the other philosophical sciences--the Philosophy of Nature, and the Philosophy of Spirit--appear, in contrast, as applied logic, so to speak, for the Logic is their animating soul. Thus, the concern of those other sciences is only to [re]cognise the logical forms in the shapes of nature and spirit, shapes that are only a particular mode of expression of the forms of pure thinking [EL § 24 Z-2; Geraets, 58].

Are we therefore to understand Hegel's language of "free release" to be purely metaphorical? After all, it appears from the above quotation that he is simply saying that the Logic is the eidetic "subtext" of nature, a set of categories in which nature is to be understood. As is frequently claimed, the relationship between Logic and nature is not a temporal one. Hegel's language of "free release" would certainly seem to be figurative, then.

However, Hegel's position is more complicated, and more mysterious than this. In the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel states that at the end of the Logic we return to the beginning (EL § 244, Z; Geraets, 307). We have already seen how this is the case: we begin with an indeterminacy beyond subject and object, and we end with an abstract determinacy that is both subject and object (the subject

that has itself for its object). However, Hegel claims in the Science of Logic that there is an identity between the indeterminacy at the beginning of the Logic and Space, the first category of the Philosophy of Nature. In a passage I have quoted already, he writes that, "it is indifferent whether this abstraction is called space, pure intuiting, or pure thinking . . . " (Miller, 97; WL I, 89). Thus, curiously, it appears as if the indeterminacy beyond subject and object with which we are left at the end of the Phenomenology is the beginning point of both the Logic and the Philosophy of Nature: in the former it is called Being, in the latter it is called Space.

In order to fully understand this, it is necessary to look again at Hegel's concept of the Aether, which, as I said earlier, figures prominently in Hegel's lecture notes from the Jena period, and shows up in parts of the Phenomenology. My account here will be of necessity somewhat speculative, but Hegel's own treatment of the transition from Logic to Nature is so opaque as to require a great deal of imagination on the part of the reader.

H.S. Harris notes that, "The ether is the energy that is absolutely conserved, the continuum at the basis of all experience."²⁹ Aether, as noted earlier, is identical with

29. H.S. Harris, editorial note in G.W.F. Hegel, The Jena System, 1804-5: Logic and Metaphysics, trans. and ed. John W. Burbidge and George di Giovanni, introduction and notes by H.S. Harris (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 172.

the indeterminacy beyond subject and object with which the Phenomenology ends and the Logic begins. As such, the Aether-energy is the incipient Idea of God, but Hegel also maintains that it is "Absolute Matter."³⁰ The Aether is Hegel's answer to the age-old question "Why is there anything at all rather than just nothing?" To simply offer up a developmental account of reality--Absolute Idea's achieving realization in the world--leaves the question unanswered, for it presupposes that something--the Absolute Idea, as well as matter--exists already. The Aether is metaphysical bedrock for Hegel. It is an ultimate, plastic medium which has "specified" itself into the realms of Idea, Nature, and Spirit. Aether itself is nothing in particular, yet as the energy through which all things come to be, it can be called Being.

Aether is thus a kind of pure potentiality. It is both pure thought and pure matter. (In this we can find another, this time quite unexpected, connection with Aristotle, since Aristotle seems to want to conceive both nous and hyle as a pure potentiality to take on form.) Aether "first" specifies itself into eidetic forms (the categories of the Logic), which, as abstract and empty, are

30. Ibid., 173. H.S. Harris writes that "aether is the point of union between extension and thought, between the physical and the intellectual, between objective reality and subjective cognition. The concept of absolute matter is the outward reflection of the 'passive' power of the intellect to become anything knowable" (Night Thoughts, 240).

in a sense "determinate nothingnesses." Nothing makes the Aether do this: as primordial energy it is boundlessly active and fertile. But it also expresses itself in the "realm" of extended being, which stands opposed to the unextended ideality of the realm of the Logic. What is the telos of this process? At a certain point, Aether rebounds backwards, like the fallout of an explosion. It folds back upon itself in the form of Spirit, which is a folding together of the extended and unextended realms: Spirit is a temporally extended (that is, time-bound and historical) thought, or objectified idea.

Thus, at the end of the Logic we find that we must go outside the circle of the Logic. What is outside the circle is the "source material" from which the determinate categories of the Logic spring: the Aether-energy. Having left behind the unextended, eidetic realm, we pass over into the realm in which extended being is possible. Beginning again with Aether, this time it becomes Space, rather than Being. It is as if the circles of Logic, Nature, and Spirit all float in the Aether, which is infinite, the All (thus, the incipient Idea of God). The Aether then "makes room within itself" for these three realms.

As I said earlier, after the Phenomenology Hegel falls silent on the topic of the Aether. The concept no longer plays a major role in his mature Logic and Philosophy of

Nature. If we look closely at the doctrine, it appears to be in certain respects Spinozistic. First, Hegel identifies the Aether with the Idea of God and with Absolute Matter, which is reminiscent of Spinoza's identification of God and Nature. Second, the first two "realms" in which the Aether specifies itself, the eidetic and the extended, are parallel to Spinoza's Thought and Extension. The realm of Spirit is not, however, found in Spinoza, and, significantly, it is essentially on just this point that Hegel critiques Spinoza.

Whatever "Spinozism" there may be to the Aether doctrine, however, is a far cry from the Romantic, pantheistic, "God-intoxicated" Spinozism of Hegel's contemporaries. Insofar as the doctrine is Spinozistic, it looks like the sort of Spinozism Spinoza was reviled for: a physicalistic, mechanistic, deterministic, essentially atheistic theory. To be sure, Hegel speaks of the Absolute Idea as God, but it is no personal God, no God of Abraham. The addition of the Aether theory to the developmental account of God has the effect of grounding the latter in an essentially unconscious play of cosmic "energy." There thus appears to be an irreducibly dark, irrational element lying beneath the surface of Hegel's rational real. In truth, we have seen this all along: is not the whole Phenomenology, including the heights of Art, Religion, and Philosophy, moved and shaped by the egoistic striving of

Desire? Could Desire be the form taken by the Aether-energy when it specifies itself as Spirit? Could Hegel's metaphysics be much closer in Spirit to that of Spinoza, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche than has been traditionally thought?

It is interesting that when Hegel states that what I have identified as Aether could be called space, pure thought, or being, he makes reference to Indian philosophy as expressing this same idea. He says that it is "altogether the same as what the Indian calls Brahma, when for years on end, physically motionless and equally unmoved in sensation, conception, fantasy, desire and so on, looking only at the tip of his nose, he says inwardly only Om, Om, Om, or else nothing at all. This dull, empty consciousness, understood as consciousness, is--being" (Miller, 97; WL I, 89). "Om" (or "Aum") is conceived in Indian thought as the energy of the universe, an ultimate,

groundless, eternal vibration from which all things come.³¹
On my account, this is exactly what Hegel means by Aether.

This interpretation of Hegel's Aether doctrine, and my application of it to the Logic-Nature transition, is highly speculative. Hegel's early musings on Aether, as well as the parts of the Logic that discuss the transition, are singularly obscure. Nevertheless, this account makes some sense out of Hegel's language of "free release." On the standard interpretation of Hegel's system, which holds that all its distinctions are atemporal, Hegel's framing of the transition from Logic to Nature is not only figurative but totally superfluous and unhelpful. If all Hegel has given us in the Logic is a set of categories which serve as principles of intelligibility, and if the Philosophy of Nature is simply an application of these principles, then

31. See Mandukya Upanishad in The Principal Upanishads, ed. and trans. S. Radhakrishnan (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 1994), 694-705. In 1827, Hegel published a review essay on Wilhelm von Humboldt's 1826 work Unter dem Namen Bhagavad-Gita bekannte Episode des Mahabharata, in which he discussed Indian philosophy at length. Clark Butler writes that "Hegel believed the difficulty [of translating the Hindu world-view into a European idiom] could be overcome through the system of categories in his Logic, which, because of its comprehensiveness, escapes cultural relativity. For example, the Brahmanism implicit in the Bhagavad-Gita, with its extinction of the individual personality through absorption in the undifferentiated cosmic Substance, was expressed in the West in the Spinozism of the early Schelling--itself antecedent to Hegel's speculative theology" (Butler, editorial remark, in Hegel: The Letters, 515-516). Ernst Benz has discussed the Idealists' interest in Indian thought in his The Mystical Sources of German Romantic Philosophy, trans. Blair R. Reynolds and Eunice M. Paul (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1983), 17-18.

why not simply say this? Why talk about the Idea "freely releasing itself," particularly if there is no deduction (dialectical or otherwise) of the categories of Space from Absolute Idea? On the standard account, Hegel's "metaphor" doesn't seem to have a metaphrand.

Suppose, however, that the system Logic-Nature-Spirit is not completely atemporal. The self-specification of the Aether into these three realms need not have taken place once, at some earlier time (which is really what the advocates of the "atemporal" reading want to avoid). Instead, it could be a perpetual process. In this case, the Aether, as an ongoing, active principle in the world, is best conceived in contemporary terms as a "theoretical entity" postulated in order to account for the ultimate ground of all things, eidetic, natural, and spiritual. Rosenkranz reports that in his Realphilosophie of 1806, Hegel refers to the "simple Idea" (einfache Idee) as "the night of the divine mystery, from whose undisturbed density, nature and conscious spirit were let go freely into their independent substance."³² I take the "simple Idea" here to be equivalent to "pure thought" or the Aether.

In any case, now that we have imbibed the heady aroma of Hegel's pure Aether of thought (the aroma wafting up

32. Rosenkranz, 192.

from his foaming chalice?) we are prepared to look at its Hermetic background.

3. Böhmean Influences on the Logic

In 1816 Hegel received invitations to teach at Heidelberg and Berlin. His chances in Berlin, however, were sabotaged by the powerful Berlin theologian Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (1780-1849), who, as Wiedmann notes, denounced Hegel's Logic as an obscure "occultism" (Geheimwissenschaft).³³ Earlier, in an 1815 letter to Hegel's arch-enemy Jakob Friedrich Fries (1773-1843), de Wette wrote that, "Mysticism reigns here mightily, and how deep we have sunk is shown in the thought of Hegel."³⁴

At times, Hegel seems to be positively encouraging the impression that he is a mystic. In the 1805 Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Hegel had stated that, "The philosophers are closer to the Lord than those who live by the crumbs of the Spirit; they read, or write, the cabinet orders of God in the original; it is their duty to write them down. The philosophers are the mystai who have been present at the decision in the innermost sanctuary."³⁵ In the Preface to the second edition of the Encyclopedia,

33. Franz Wiedmann, Hegel: An Illustrated Biography, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Pegasus, 1968), 53.

34. Hegel in Berichten seiner Zeitgenossen, ed. Günther Nicolai (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1970), 117.

35. G.W.F. Hegel, Jubiläumsausgabe, Vol. III, Geschichte der Philosophie, ed. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1927-1940), 96.

Hegel writes that, "what was revealed as a mystery in earlier times should now be revealed for thinking itself" (Geraets, 17; Werke 8, 31).

In a passage I quoted in Chapter Three, Hegel writes in one of the Zusätze to the Encyclopedia Logic that "the meaning of the speculative is to be understood as being the same as what used in earlier times to be called 'mystical'" Hegel goes on to state that the mystical is only something mysterious and incomprehensible for the Understanding. At the level of Reason or speculation, things are different. "But when it is regarded as synonymous with the speculative," Hegel writes, "the mystical is the concrete unity of just those determinations that count as true for the understanding only in their separation and opposition. . . . Thus, everything rational can equally be called 'mystical'; but this only amounts to saying that it transcends the understanding. It does not at all imply that what is so spoken of must be considered inaccessible to thinking and incomprehensible" (EL § 82, Z; Geraets, 133). Hegel repeats this claim in his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion of 1824, where he states, "The Trinity is called the mystery of God; its content is mystical, i.e., speculative" (LPR III, 192; VPR III, 125).

The Preface to the second edition of the Encyclopedia (1827) provides ample evidence of Hegel's willingness to be grouped with the mystics. Introducing some of his basic

ideas, Hegel mentions Böhme more than once. He writes, "The spirit is essentially consciousness, and hence [consciousness] of the content made into an object. As feeling, the spirit is just the not yet objective content itself (only a quale, to use an expression of Jakob Böhme); it is just the lowest stage of consciousness, in the form of the soul, which we have in common with the lower animals" (Geraets, 12; Werke 8, 24). Hegel goes on to write of Böhme that

The name 'Teutonic Philosopher' has rightly been conferred upon this mighty spirit. On the one hand, he has enlarged the basic import of religion, [taken] on its own account, to the universal Idea; within that basic import he formulated the highest problems of reason and tried to grasp spirit and nature in their determinate spheres and configurations. [All this was possible] because he took as his foundation [the thesis] that the spirit of man and all things else are created in the image of God--and, of course, of God as the Trinity; their life is just the process of their reintegration into that original image after the loss of it. On the other hand (and conversely), he forcibly misappropriated the forms of natural things (sulphur, saltpeter, etc.; the sharp, the bitter,

etc.) as spiritual forms and forms of thought
[Geraets, 15; Werke 8, 28-29].

In the same text Hegel also makes several admiring references to the arch-theosophist and occultist of his day, Franz von Baader. In support of his own attempt to "rationalize" religious doctrine, Hegel quotes volume five of Baader's Fermenta Cognitionis (1824). Baader claims there that the idea that religion is only a "matter of the heart" is a view dear to atheists, who know that to undermine religion they must undermine the notion that a rational theory of religion is possible.³⁶ After quoting Baader, Hegel goes on to state that,

What is most sublime, most profound, and most inward has been called forth into the light of day in the religions, philosophies, and works of art, in more or less pure, in clearer or more obscure shapes, often in very repulsive ones. We can count it as a particular merit of Franz von Baader that he not only goes on bringing such forms to our recollection, but also with a profoundly speculative spirit he brings their basic import expressly into scientific honour because on that basis he expounds and confirms the philosophical Idea [Geraets, 15].

36. Baader, Fermenta Cognitionis (Berlin, 1824), Preface, ixff; (Geraets, 14; Werke, 27).

In an extraordinary footnote, Hegel writes that, "I am certainly delighted to learn that Herr von Baader agrees with many of my propositions--as is evident both from the content of several of his more recent writings and from his references to me by name. About most of what he contests--and even quite easily about everything--it would not be difficult for me to come to an understanding with him, that is to say, to show that there is, in fact, no departure from his views in it" (Geraets, 15; Werke 8, 29). Hegel then goes on to take issue with a criticism Baader made of one aspect of his Philosophy of Nature.³⁷

Although Baader does make some favorable remarks about Hegel in the first volume of Fermenta Cognitionis, Hegel's assessment of his relationship with Baader seems to have been highly unrealistic. Baader, for his part, appears to have been simply puzzled by Hegel's attention and insistence on their ability to "come to an understanding." In Chapter One, I quoted Clark Butler's remarks on "Hegel's abortive courtship of von Baader." Butler writes that "despite apparent differences, Hegel sought to persuade both the public and von Baader himself that their positions were reconcilable. . . . Von Baader responded negatively to

37. Baader replied to Hegel's defence of himself here in an 1824 essay entitled "Hegel on My Doctrine in the Preface to the Second Edition of the Encyclopedia." See his Sämtliche Werke, ed. F. Hoffmann et al. (Leipzig, 1851-60), Folge I, 10:306-09.

such overtures, though he respected Hegel as a critic of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling."³⁸ It is not unusual for one prominent scholar to "court" another, for career advancement, or often simply to establish an intellectual friendship. Baader, however, was a decidedly strange and marginal figure for Hegel to court-- unless, of course, Hegel saw himself as somehow belonging on the margins with Baader.

To return to Böhme, in the 1812 *Doctrine of Being* of the Science of Logic, Hegel offers the following in a remark concerning "quality" in the section on Dasein:

Qualierung or Inqualierung, [which are terms from out of] a philosophy which goes deep but into a turbid depth, refers to Determinacy as in itself, but at the same time is another in itself; or it refers to the familiar nature of opposition, as it is in its essence. In this respect opposition constitutes the inner nature of quality and is essentially its self-movement in itself. Qualierung means therefore, in the aforementioned philosophy, the movement of a determinacy in itself, in which respect it situates and fastens itself in its negative nature (in its Qual) from out of another, signifying in general the

38. Butler, editorial remark in Hegel: The Letters, 570.

quality's own internal unrest by which it produces and maintains itself only in conflict.³⁹

Qualierung or Inqualierung--which might be rendered "qualification" or "inqualification"--refer to Böhme's dynamic conception of quality. In Aurora he states that, "A quality is the mobility, boiling, springing and driving of a thing."⁴⁰ Hegel quotes this line in his remarks on Böhme in the Lectures on the History of Philosophy (LHP III, 199; Werke 20, 103).

In the 1832 edition of the Doctrine of Being (the only segment of the Logic Hegel finished revising before his death), the above passage has been significantly altered. It now reads as follows: "Qualierung or Inqualierung, an expression of Jakob Böhme's, whose philosophy goes deep, but into a turbid depth, signifies the movement of a quality (of sourness, bitterness, fieriness, etc.) within itself in so far as it situates and fastens itself in its negative nature (in its Qual) from out of an other--signifies in general the quality's own internal unrest by which it produces and maintains itself only in conflict" (Miller, 114; WL I [1832], 109). Aside from cutting some of the more opaque lines from the original, Hegel has now

39. WL (1812 ed.), 82. Since Miller bases his translation on the 1832 edition, he does not include this passage.
 40. Aurora, ch. 1, § 3; Aurora, trans. John Sparrow, ed. C.J. Barker and D.S. Hehner (Edmonds, WA.: Holmes Publishing, 1992), 40.

explicitly attributed Qualierung and Inqualierung to Böhme, and included reference to Böhme's categories of sour, bitter and "fire" (heat?).

For some reason, Hegel decided against referring to Böhme by name in the first edition of the Doctrine of Being. In fact, Hegel makes no reference to Böhme in any of his published writings until the Encyclopedia in 1817 (in which a very brief reference to Böhme occurs in paragraph 472 of the Philosophy of Spirit). In the 1832 edition of the Doctrine of Being--as well as in the Preface to the 1827 Encyclopedia quoted above--Hegel seems to be deliberately correcting this omission and more openly acknowledging his indebtedness to Böhme. This very likely indicates that since 1805 Hegel continued to study Böhme closely, no doubt making use of van Ghert's kind gift of the Böhme edition (see Chapter Four). Thus, we are faced with exactly the opposite of what many commentators on Hegel's relationship to Böhme would have us expect: instead of moving away from Böhme in his mature period, Hegel actually seems to be moving, in a very public manner, toward him. Hegel's attempt to ally himself with Baader, who was widely known at the time as "Böhmius redivivus," only reinforces this impression.

I now proceed to what is specifically Böhmean in the Logic. In the Encyclopedia Logic Hegel states that, "the Logic is the all-animating spirit of all sciences, and the

thought-determinations contained in the Logic are the pure spirits [die reinen Geister]" (EL § 24 Z-2; Geraets, 59). In the Science of Logic Hegel refers to Logic as a "realm of shades [Schatten]." ⁴¹ These passages make sense only if we suppose that Hegel thinks of the categories or ideas of the Logic as being in some sense minds. The identification of eide with minds is a perennial idea in the philosophic tradition. It appears in Aristotle when he says of the soul that it "must be a substance as the form of a natural body potential with life, and [such] substance is an actuality [entelecheia]. So the soul is the actuality of such a body." ⁴² It is also a theme of Spinoza's thought.

The place of this idea in Hegel's Logic should be fairly obvious: if Absolute Idea is, in effect, the "pure eidos"--or, in Aristotelian terms, the actuality--of self-thinking thought, then Absolute Idea is a kind of pure mind, or formal mind. In the Preface to the Phenomenology Hegel states that when Being becomes "absolutely mediated," it becomes the "the Concept" which, he says, is "self-like" (selbstisch; Miller, 21; PG, 29). Since all preceding categories of the Logic are approximations to Absolute Idea, each is, in effect, an approximation to mind. They are ghostly (geisterhaft) "shades" because they are only

41. G.W.F. Hegel, Werke, Vol. 3, Wissenschaft der Logik, ed. L. von Henning (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1840-1847), 47.

42. Aristotle, De Anima, B, 412a20-22, trans. Hippocrates G. Apostle in Aristotle: Selected Works (Grinnell: Peripatetic Press, 1982), 266.

partially real. Even the Absolute Idea, the Pluto of this "Reich der Schatten," is ultimately only the shadow cast by embodied self-thinking thought.

We might ask what the relation is between the spirit-shades of the Logic and the Spirit of the Phenomenology and Philosophy of Spirit. Quite simply, the Spirit realized in mankind is Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost (heilige Geist). In themselves, the eide of the Logic are, as I have already said, merely formal and empty. In the living Spirit of mankind, however, these eide-spirits have trod the Via Dolorosa of the Phenomenology and, so to speak, "earned their wings" (recall the parallelism between the categories of the Phenomenology and the Logic--the Phenomenology is the "logos made flesh"). They have become fully concrete, fully expressed. There is more than a mere analogy to Christian doctrine here, however. Hegel's spirits and his Spirit really are supernatural. In the 1831 Preface to the second edition of the Science of Logic Hegel writes, "If nature as such, as the physical world, is contrasted with the natural sphere, then logic must certainly be said to be the supernatural [Übernatürliche], which permeates every relationship of man to nature, his sensation, intuition, desire, need, instinct, and simply by doing so transforms it into something human, even though only formally human, into ideas and purposes" (Miller, 32; WL I, 10; my emphasis). The spirits of the Logic are logically prior to

the natural world, and the Holy Spirit only appears in the world through the activity of men who have raised themselves above the level of nature or the animal.

Böhme, of course, analyzes God and the process of coming-to-be into seven "source spirits" (Quellgeister), which he also calls "properties" (Eigenschaften), "qualities" (Qualitäten), and "forms" (Gestalten). His source-spirits are obviously equivalent to the moments of the Logic. Hegel's Logic can be said to be a system of Quellgeister, since it is these categories (or spirits) which, as we have seen, inform all of reality and are the Grundbegriffe for all the sciences. Further, Böhme introduces his discussion of the seven source-spirits as a discussion "of the corpus of an angelical kingdom."⁴³ Hegel does not treat his Logic-spirits as angels, but rather as shades like those in Hades or Limbo. Nevertheless, the parallel is clear.

Further, Böhme's account of the interrelationships of his seven source-spirits is strikingly like Hegel's treatment of his system of Logic-spirits. In Aurora, Böhme writes, "All the seven spirits are generated one in another, the one continually generates the other, not one of them is the first, nor is any one of them the last; for the last generates as well the first as the second, third, fourth, and so on to the last."⁴⁴ In Böhme's Clavis, he

43. Aurora, ch. 8 heading; Sparrow, 147

44. Aurora, ch. 10, § 2; Sparrow, 207-208.

writes that, "the first and seventh properties are always to be reckoned as one, and also the second and sixth as one, as well as the third and fifth as one, the fourth alone is the separating limit [Scheide-Ziel], since there are only three properties of nature, according to the revelation of the Holy Trinity of God."⁴⁵

What these quotations call to mind, of course, is the famous circularity of the Logic. Böhme claims that his first and final spirits are one, just as Hegel claims that the end of the Logic returns to the beginning._ In the Phenomenology Hegel says that the dialectic "is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual" (Miller, 10; PG, 14). Of course, Böhme also says that his second and sixth and third and fifth spirits are one, but there is even an analogue for this in Hegel. Each of the triadic subdivisions Being, Essence and Concept in the Logic "correspond" with one another, so that, for instance, "Quality" in Being is analogous to "Intro-reflection" (Reflexion in ihm selbst) in Essence, just as the major triad of Being-Essence-Concept corresponds to the major, triadic divisions of the other Hegelian sciences.

45. Quoted in David Walsh The Mysticism of Innerworldly Fulfillment: A Study of Jacob Böhme (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1983), 82.

Whereas Hegel employs the image of the circle to describe the structure of the Logic and the system as a whole, Böhme employs the image of the wheel. Böhme writes in Aurora,

But if I should describe the Deity in its birth in a small, round circle, in the highest depth, then it is thus: Suppose a wheel standing before you, with seven wheels one so made in the other that it could go on all sides, forward, backward and cross ways, without need of turning back. In its going, that always-one wheel, in its turning about, generates the others, and yet none of them vanishes out of sight, but all seven are visible. . . . The seven wheels are the seven spirits of God. They are always generating one another, and are like the turning of a wheel . . . and the seven wheels are hooped round with fellies, like a round globe.⁴⁶

Böhme goes on to liken the seven wheels or spirits to "God the Father," the nave of the wheel of wheels ("there are not seven naves, but one only") to the "Son of God," and the spokes to the "Holy Spirit." Interestingly, Oetinger also makes prominent use of the circle metaphor. In his

46. Aurora, ch. 13, §§ 71-72; Sparrow, 328-329.

Philosophie der Alten (1762) he writes, "Nature is a circle, it has many beginnings and endings."⁴⁷

Of course, it is Hegel's entire "developmental" account of God, and not just this or that detail, which seems so strikingly like Böhme. It appears, however, that there is a key difference between the two on precisely this issue. Böhme seems to maintain that our reflection on God "completes" a pre-existent God, whereas Hegel maintains that our (philosophical) reflection itself just is God. I say "it appears" because it is a dangerous business to make authoritative statements about where Böhme leaves off and Hegel begins. Böhme's thought (like Hegel's) is so obscure, and expressed in so many different ways, that no one can claim to have thoroughly understood all of its implications. Whatever the differences might be between Böhme and Hegel with respect to the "biography of God," it is nonetheless true that the similarities are striking.

In Mysterium Magnum, Böhme refers to God before his "development," God qua Ungrund, as "the dark nature" and states that "in the dark nature he is not called God."⁴⁸

47. Oetinger, Die Philosophie der Alten, wiederkommend in der gùl denen Zeit (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1762), Vol. 1, 182. Some of Hegel's programmatic remarks in the Logic also seem to bear the impress of Oetinger. In the Science of Logic, in a passage concerning the nature of "logical forms" (logischen Formen), Hegel writes, "When they are taken as fixed determinations and consequently in their separation from each other and not as held together in an organic unity, then they are dead forms and the spirit which is their living, concrete unity does not dwell in them" (Miller 48; WL I, 31).

48. Mysterium Magnum, ch. 7, § 14.

The concept of Ungrund bears some similarity to Hegel's Aether. Like the Aether it is an ultimate, dynamic ground of all being. Walsh refers to Ungrund as a "dark inchoate will for self-revelation."⁴⁹ All of the spirits are "contained" within God qua Ungrund, in potentia. Böhme refers to the Ungrund as both Alles and Nichts.⁵⁰ As we saw in Chapter One, God qua Ungrund cannot achieve self-revelation unless He takes some determinate form, unless, as Walsh puts it, He generates "a spiritual corporality."⁵¹ This is, in effect, Böhme's Logic: the "system" of seven spirits, represented as a wheel of wheels, existing eternally, from which nature or extension will be "projected."

Böhme expresses the ideality of this system by calling it "eternal nature." The coming-into-being of this spiritual corporality is a process of specifying or determining the will of the Ungrund. The Ungrund is an "out-going" will--a will for self-revelation--which Böhme calls Nichts. To achieve this revelation, however, the out-going will must fall within the gravitational attraction of an "in-going" will, which is a "contracting"

49. David Walsh, "A Mythology of Reason: The Persistence of Pseudo-Science in the Modern World," in Science, Pseudo-Science, and Utopianism in Early Modern Thought, ed. Stephen McKnight (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 154.

50. Böhme, Von der Gnaden-Wahl, in Sämtliche Schriften, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert and August Faust (Stuttgart: Frommanns Verlag, 1955-61), Vol. 6, Kap. 1, Abs. 3.

51. Walsh, Mysticism of Innerworldly Fulfillment, 78.

and individuating force. It is the "in-going" will which gives Nichts determinate being. In fact, Böhme calls this will Etwas. Böhme writes in Mysterium Magnum that, "the eternal free will has introduced itself into darkness, pain, and source; and so also through the darkness into the fire and light, even into a kingdom of joy; so that the Nothing might be known in the Something."⁵² Böhme writes that "the nothing is a craving after something."⁵³

The parallels to Hegel here are so obvious they scarcely require comment. Ungrund corresponds to Hegel's "indeterminacy" or Aether. Böhme calls Ungrund Alles and Nichts, just as Hegel calls "indeterminacy" Reines Sein and Nichts. Further, Böhme conceives the Alles-Nichts as an active will, just as Hegel sees Sein-Nichts as a kind of conceptual dynamism, and so dubs it Werden. For Böhme, the out-going will of Alles-Nichts must enter into or become (he is not too clear on this point) the more determinate will of Etwas. In the Logic, as we have seen, Becoming gives rise to Being-there (Dasein), which is translated by many commentators as "Determinate Being." This is obviously analogous to Böhme's Etwas. In fact, in the Science of Logic, in a passage immediately following the discussion of Böhme's Qualierung, Hegel writes that "Being-

52. Mysterium Magnum, ch. 26, § 37.

53. Böhme goes on to say that this is "the eternal origin of magic." Quoted in Basarab Nicolescu, Science, Meaning and Evolution: The Cosmology of Jacob Böhme, trans. Rob Baker (New York: Parabola Books, 1991), 211.

there is a being-there, Something" (das Dasein ist Daseiendes, Etwas)" (Miller, 115; WL I, 110).

In one of the Zusätze to the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel describes the dialectical "overcoming" of Becoming in language that immediately calls to mind Böhme: "becoming proves itself to be what is thoroughly restless, but unable to maintain itself in this abstract restlessness; for, insofar as being and nothing vanish in becoming--and just this is its concept--becoming is thereby itself something that vanishes, like a fire that dies out within itself by consuming its material." Dasein or Etwas is the ashes left behind by the fire: the energy of Werden (=Sein/Nichts = Nichts/Sein) "coagulates" as Dasein, as Determinate Being.

As I noted in Chapter One, Böhme frequently talks about God "in Himself." He often uses this expression to refer to the "contracted being" of God within the first of the source-spirits, Sour. However, it is God's nature to become "for Himself" (an expression Böhme does not use). In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion of 1827 Hegel states that, "God can be known or cognized, for it is God's nature to reveal Himself, to be manifest" (LPR I, 382; VPR I, 278). Hegel claims that to say otherwise is contrary to the Christian faith. The above quote continues as follows: "Those who say that God is not revelatory do not speak from the [standpoint of the] Christian religion at any rate, for the Christian religion is called the revealed religion.

Its content is that God is revealed to human beings, that they know what God is. Previously they did not know this; but in the Christian religion there is no longer any secret--a mystery, certainly, but not in the sense that it is not known."

Hegel criticizes Spinoza in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy on the grounds that his God or substance remains "in Himself." Recall that these lectures were delivered in 1805, during Hegel's initial period of Böhme-enthusiasm in Jena. Hegel refers to Spinoza's God as der Abgrund der Substanz (the abyss of substance). Abgrund is a term which first appears to have been used in a philosophical or mystical context by Eckhart. As I noted in Chapter One, it seems to be the conceptual ancestor of Böhme's Ungrund (and Böhme also sometimes uses Abgrund). The sense in which Hegel uses Abgrund here makes it very clear that he is thinking of Spinoza's God as equivalent to the unmanifest, undeveloped, potentia of Böhme's Ungrund.

This impression is confirmed by the following extraordinary passage from the Lectures:

[Spinoza's] philosophy has only a rigid and unyielding substance, and not yet Spirit; in it we are not at home with ourselves [man ist nicht bei sich]. God is not Spirit here, because he is not the triune [der Dreieinige]. Substance remains rigid and petrified,

without Böhme's sources [Quellen; i.e. source-spirits]; for the individual determinations in the form of determinations of the understanding are not Böhme's source-spirits [Quellgeister], which energize and expand in one another [LHP III, 288; Werke 20, 166].

The passage is extraordinary because Hegel is criticizing a major "canonical" philosopher for failing to come up to the standard of Böhme, a marginal figure, considered by most people even in Hegel's day not to be a philosopher at all. It is also extraordinary because it shows how deeply immersed Hegel was in Böhme's way of thinking, how in discussing a thinker very different from Böhme, Hegel was still operating with the terms and distinctions and thought-patterns of Böhme uppermost in his mind.

In the Logic, in the Appearance (Erscheinung) section of the Doctrine of Essence, Hegel discusses the category of "Force and its Utterance" (Kraft und ihre Ausserung). He claims that in Force, the opposition of "Whole and Parts" is reconciled. In a Zusatz to the Encyclopedia Logic Hegel states, "Although it consists implicitly of parts, the whole does cease to be a whole when it is divided; a force, on the other hand, only proves itself to be a force by uttering itself. It returns to itself in its utterance, for the utterance is itself a force once more" (EL § 136 Z-

1; Geraets, 206-207). One is reminded here of Böhme's Ton (Sound or Tone). At a certain point, the primal will toward self-manifestation gives rise to the source-spirit Love, which is a seeking after illumination or self-completion. As I said in Chapter One, this seeking issues in a phenomenon which is a kind of "eject" of the seeking--a kind of significant epiphenomenon. This is Tone. As separate from Love, but as a product of Love, Tone makes Love manifest to itself. With Tone, the life of God is ready for fulfillment: having given rise to a "speech" or "expression" of itself (Tone), the process becomes a thing definite to itself.

Böhme's seventh spirit, of course, is Body (Corpus), which encompasses the other six. It represents the "concretization" of the process through its self-expression. This concretization is the completion of the cycle, but as involving the cycle's self-awareness it includes the cycle as well. Böhme states that God's "hunger and desire is after substance."⁵⁴ For Böhme, all things strive to become fully specified and concrete, including God. In a striking parallel to Böhme's thought, Hegel characterizes his Absolute Idea as the "Concrete Universal," and treats it as substance, as a kind of spiritual body (as we have seen, it is an Aristotelian "pure actuality": complete, containing its end within

54. Six Theosophic Points, ch. 1; § 27.

itself). Of course, for both Böhme and Hegel this eidetic process must realize itself in the world and become truly embodied, in order for it to be fully actual. Thus, Hegel speaks in the Philosophy of Spirit of "Objective Spirit," in which the Idea is embodied in law and morality, as well as of "Absolute Spirit," in which the Idea finds its highest expression in Art, Religion, and Philosophy.

Finally, although its relevance to Böhme is slight, the occurrence of alchemical terminology in the Logic is worth mentioning. Three times in the Encyclopedia Logic Hegel employs the term caput mortuum.⁵⁵ Geraets, et al, explain this as "the alchemist's term for the 'dead' precipitate that remained when all the 'living spirit' had been extracted or given off" (Geraets, 316 n.45). Cyril O'Regan writes that caput mortuum is the "precipitate that remains after spirit has been extracted."⁵⁶ C.J.S. Thompson seems to concur, describing caput mortuum as "the term given to the residue that was left in the bulb of a retort after an operation . . ."⁵⁷ In Psychology and Alchemy, C.G. Jung quotes an alchemical text which, he says, refers to caput mortuum: ". . . Then will appear in the bottom of the vessel the mighty Ethiopian [i.e., the

55. For a discussion of Hegel's use of this term, see Karin Figala, "Der alchemische Begriff des Caput Mortuum in der symbolischen Terminologie Hegels," Hegel-Studien 11 (1974): 141-51.

56. See Cyril O'Regan, The Heterodox Hegel (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 384 n.61.

57. C.J.S. Thompson, The Lure and Romance of Alchemy (New York: Bell Publishing, 1990), 116.

black substance or Nigredo], burned calcined, discoloured, altogether dead and lifeless."⁵⁸ Hegel first applies the term to the Kantian thing-in-itself (EL § 44; Geraets, 87). Later, he refers to Essence taken abstractly as "the caput mortuum of abstraction" (EL § 112; Geraets, 175). Finally, he applies the term to the transcendent conception of God: "As the abstract essence in the Beyond, outside of which all distinction and determinacy must fall, God is in fact a mere name, a mere caput mortuum of the abstractive understanding" (EL § 112, Z; Geraets, 177). It is apparent that Hegel would regard Böhme's Ungrund as a caput mortuum.

Hegel's use of caput mortuum to describe Essence is the most interesting occurrence of the term. Essence, of course, is a stepping-stone on the way to Concept and Absolute Idea. Essence itself is indeed a caput mortuum in so far as it is a negated provisional definition for the Absolute Idea. It "dies" or falls away, yet it is at the same time "material" used in the process of dialectic which presses on to Absolute Idea. Hegel's use of caput mortuum to describe Essence taken abstractly (i.e., taken on its own, in isolation from the other categories) indicates that he recognized the parallel between dialectic and alchemical transmutation: determinate negation is the nigredo which precedes the synthesis of rubedo, the philosopher's stone,

58. C.G. Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 401.

or the Absolute (see the following chapter for a more detailed treatment of alchemy in relation to Hegel).

I mentioned in Chapter One that it is possible that Böhme was influenced by the Jewish Kabbalah. In fact, study of the Kabbalah must lead one to the conclusion that either there is an astounding, coincidental correspondence between Böhme's ideas and those of the Jewish mystics, or that he was influenced by the Kabbalah. My treatment of Böhme so far has, I hope, led to a similar conclusion about Hegel: the resemblance of his thought to Böhme's is either an incredible coincidence, or he must have been a careful student of Böhme who self-consciously set about to reappropriate and resituate the master's theosophy in a more wissenschaftlich form. An examination of the doctrines of Kabbalism, then, will reveal deeper intellectual strata, the ultimate origins of certain Hegelian ideas. In fact, it will emerge that Hegel is so close on many points to Kabbalism that it is likely there were other Kabbalistic influences on him besides Böhme.

4. The Kabbalah

(a) A Brief History of Kabbalism

"Kabbalah" means "tradition." The Kabbalah is thought to have been a teaching handed down from God to Moses, although the earliest textual evidence of a Jewish mystical tradition dates from about the first century B.C.

Kabbalism is a fusion of early Jewish mysticism with gnosticism, Neoplatonism, and possibly Hermetic gnosis. Some have argued that Kabbalism definitely begins in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries in Spain. Others maintain that it goes back much farther. Far from being one unitary doctrine or movement, there are various schools and strains of Kabbalism. Some may be considered to be fairly traditional in concurring ultimately with the teachings of orthodox, non-mystical Judaism; others are quite radical in their departure from tradition.

We may make an initial division between an "ecstatic" and a "speculative" Kabbalah. The first type is represented pre-eminently by Abraham Abulafia (1240-ca. 1292), who sought an experience of mystical transport through contemplating combinations of Hebrew letters, and through gematria, the science of deriving insight into God's creation by replacing the letters of the Hebrew alphabet with numbers, computing the numerical "values" of significant words and looking for meaningful "correspondences" between words. Speculative Kabbalah, on the other hand, seeks not an experience of divine union, but rather discursive knowledge of the divine through reflection on the hidden meaning of Scripture. It is with this form of Kabbalah that I am chiefly concerned here.

As to the major texts of the Kabbalah, three must be mentioned. Scholem calls the Sefer Yezirah or Book of the

Creation the "earliest extant Hebrew text of systematic, speculative thought."⁵⁹ Its date of composition is uncertain, but we know that versions of the Sefer Yezirah existed in the tenth century. It was first printed in Mantua in 1562. Composed of less than 2000 words, the Sefer Yezirah dealt with the 32 "secret paths of wisdom," the mystical significance of the 22 elemental letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the ten Sephiroth (which will be discussed shortly). The Bahir ("brilliance" or "illumination"), a collection of Kabbalistic writings, some new and some very old, was assembled in Provence in the twelfth century. Many Kabbalists ascribe parts of the Bahir to Rabbi Nehuniah ben HaKana, who flourished in the first century A.D. The Bahir is noteworthy for its highly imaginative usage of symbolism and metaphor. The classic text of speculative Kabbalism, however, is the Sefer Ha Zohar, or Book of Splendour, a text of almost a thousand pages now thought to have been composed by Moses de Leon of Castille in the late thirteenth century, though attributed by him to earlier sources. Gerschom Scholem refers to de Leon's orientation as "Gnostic" and notes that, "Moses de Leon wrote the Zohar in order to stem the growth of the radical rationalistic mood which was widespread among his

59. Gerschom Scholem, Kabbalah (New York: New American Library, 1974), 23.

educated contemporaries and with regard to which we have quite a number of interesting testimonials."⁶⁰

(b) Hegel's knowledge of Kabbalism

Hegel studied several histories of philosophy in putting together his Lectures of 1805. One of these was Johann Jacob Brucker's Historia Critica Philosophiae, which appeared in five Latin volumes in Leipzig in 1742-1744 (a second edition came out in 1766-1767). In introducing his Lectures, Hegel states that Brucker's work "is so much useless ballast" (LHP I, 112; Werke 18, 134). The substance of Hegel's criticism is that many of Brucker's accounts are inaccurate, and deformed by his commitment to Wolffian metaphysics.⁶¹ Nevertheless, Hegel read these volumes carefully. One interesting feature of Brucker is that he devotes considerable attention to the Hermetic tradition. His discussion of "Egyptian philosophy" includes an account of Hermes Trismegistus, whom Brucker seems to think may actually have been a real historical personage. He discusses figures like Bruno, Lull, and Campanella. In Volume IV, Part 1, he includes a chapter entitled "The Restoration of Pythagorean-Platonic-Kabbalistic Philosophy" which includes accounts of the work

60. Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (New York: Schocken Books, 1946), 203, 177.

61. See also the Preface to the second edition of the Encyclopedia Logic, in which similar criticisms are levelled against Brucker (Geraets, 10; Werke 8, 22).

of Reuchlin, Agrippa, and the Cambridge Platonists Cudworth and More. A later chapter in the same volume, titled "The Theosophists," discusses Fludd, Böhme, and Francis Mercury van Helmont. Most significant, however, is the more than 150 pages Brucker devotes to the Kabbalah in Volume II.

Brucker's inclusion of Hermetic theosophy is not unusual. It merely reflects the interests of his time. In just the same way, Copleston in his History of Philosophy makes glancing references to thinkers of his own time who were considered significant, but who probably will not be read a hundred years from now. Similarly, J.N. Findlay in his Hegel: A Re-Examination feels compelled to spar with Russell, though if he were writing the book today he probably would not even mention Russell. Thelma Z. Lavine's popular introduction to philosophy, From Socrates to Sartre--published in 1984 and simultaneously filmed as a television series--covers only six philosophers, one of whom is Marx. Had Lavine written her book today, she might have assessed Marx's importance quite differently. Brucker's History demonstrates just how important Hermetic philosophy was for the eighteenth century. Of course, this does not mean that it was received positively by everyone in that century. In fact, Brucker's attitude toward Hermeticism is predominantly hostile. But we must not let the fact that he thought Hermeticism to be influential

nonsense overshadow the fact that he thought it influential nonsense.

In his Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Hegel boils down Brucker's extensive remarks on the Kabbalah to about two pages. Though the brevity of Hegel's treatment might suggest that he shared Brucker's hostility, there is no evidence for this in what Hegel actually says. He does mention that Kabbalistic writers sometimes "sink into the fantastic" (LHP II, 395; Werke 19, 426), but he says similar things about Böhme, and yet takes Böhme's thought very seriously.⁶² I will not discuss Hegel's account of the Kabbalah here, for it is from start to finish identical with a particular form of Kabbalah, that of Isaac Luria (1534-1572), which I shall discuss at length in Chapter Seven. In the present section, I will be concerned simply with an account of the basic, traditional concepts of Kabbalah. Whether or not Hegel consciously recognized his indebtedness to the Kabbalah is irrelevant. His thought is similar to it in an extraordinary number of ways.

If there was an influence of the Kabbalah on Hegel, how did it take place? One source was undoubtedly Brucker.

62. In the Preface to the second edition of the Encyclopedia Logic Hegel makes a brief swipe at "gnostic and Kabbalistic phantasmagorias" (Geraets, 17; Werke 8, 31). But "kabbalistische" was a common epithet in Hegel's day for what the Germans call Schwärmerei, ecstatic, visionary mysticism or enthusiasm of a particularly mindless sort. It does not necessarily refer to the real Kabbalah, any more than our term "cabal" refers to Kabbalistic sects.

Another, more indirect source was Jakob Böhme, whose indebtedness to the Kabbalah is almost universally acknowledged (Brucker even remarks on it). When Oetinger asked a Rabbi in Frankfurt-am-Main how he might better understand the Kabbalah, the Rabbi directed him to Böhme's works! A seventeenth century follower of Böhme, Johann Jacob Späth, was so astounded on learning of the roots of Böhme's thought in the Kabbalah that he converted to Judaism.⁶³ It was Lurianic Kabbalism that was the major influence on Böhme.

It is unlikely that Hegel read any Kabbalist works in the original Hebrew. However, it is highly probable that he did read at least some Latin translations, published as part of Knorr von Rosenroth's large compendium of Kabbalistic literature, the Kabbala Denudata (Kabbalah Unveiled) (1677-1684). Amongst other things, the Kabbala Denudata included large excerpts from the Lurianic Kabbalah. It also included a long essay by Francis Mercury van Helmont, the alchemist friend of Leibniz discussed in Chapter One, who was responsible for introducing the Cambridge Platonists More and Cudworth to the Kabbalah. The Kabbala Denudata made Kabbalism accessible to every educated person, and affected attitudes to and interpretations of Kabbalah until the end of the nineteenth

63. Both anecdotes are recounted in Scholem, Major Trends, 238.

century.⁶⁴ It contained many errors in translation, but Scholem argues that it does not seriously distort Kabbalism.⁶⁵

I now turn to some of the details of the Kabbalist metaphysics and cosmology.

(c) *Bereshith* . . .

The root of the Hebrew word Yahveh means "to become." Scholem writes that "The essence of the Kabbalistic idea of God . . . lies in its resolutely dynamic conception of the Godhead . . . "⁶⁶ Though God is understood as a process, and this process is knowable, most Kabbalists could not accept the idea of a God made wholly manifest and so they held onto the idea that God possesses a transcendent aspect. This was given a name by the early Kabbalists of Spain and Provence: Ein-Sof ("the Infinite"). Some Kabbalists, like Moses Cordovero (1522-1570), who was the teacher of Isaac Luria, maintained that the transcendent Ein-Sof alone is truly God.

In the works of other Kabbalists, such as Luria, Ein-Sof plays a role virtually identical to Böhme's Ungrund. The Zohar of Moses de Leon (1240-1305)--which Scholem

64. There had been earlier translations of some Kabbalist works. For instance, Guillaume Postel (1510-1581) translated the Sefer Yezirah and Zohar into Latin.

65. Scholem, Kabbalah, 416

66. Scholem, On The Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Schocken Books, 1991), 158.

characterizes as "Jewish theosophy"⁶⁷--announces that, "From the mystery of Ein-Sof a flame is kindled and inside the flame a hidden well comes into being. The primordial point shines forth in being when the well breaks through the aether."⁶⁸ Just as Böhme holds that nature is an unfolding of the dynamic "eternal nature" contained within God, so the Zohar, in Scholem's words, holds that "The creation of the world, that is to say, the creation of something out of nothing, is itself but the external aspect of something which takes place in God Himself."⁶⁹

The first stage in the manifestation of Ein-Sof is sometimes conceived as Ayin, or "Nothing." Ein-Sof, as the Infinite, is supposed to be Absolute All, whereas Ayin is Absolute Nothing. According to Halevi, these two are really identical.⁷⁰ (In Böhme's formulation, Alles = Nichts; in Hegel's, Sein = Nichts.) Scholem maintains that Ayin is a kind of primal unity that transcends the subject-object distinction.⁷¹ Nevertheless, although Ein-Sof/Ayin is neither subject nor object, its telos is to develop into a true or absolute subject. Ayin is said to become Ani, "I" (Ayin le-Ani, "Nothing changes into I")⁷² According

67. Scholem, Major Trends, 205.

68. Zohar 1:15a; quoted in Scholem, Kabbalah, 109-110.

69. Scholem, Major Trends, 217. See also p. 223: "Creation is nothing but an external development of those forces which are active in God Himself."

70. Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, A Kabbalistic Universe (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1977), 7

71. Scholem, Major Trends, 221.

72. Ibid., 218.

to the Kabbalists, "God willed to see God," to become fully manifest to Himself; to achieve perfect self-knowledge or self-relation.⁷³

In the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel uses "I" to express the self-relation of Idea or God through man: "only man reduplicates himself in such a way that he is the universal that is for the universal. This is the case for the first time when man knows himself to be an 'I'" (EL § 24 Z-1; Geraets, 57). Of course, Hegel holds that it is through man, that God "achieves" self-knowledge. For traditional Judeo-Christian belief this is as heretical an idea as one can conceive: to make God somehow dependent upon man. The Kabbalah, however, is not traditional Judaism. Scholem writes that, "the Zohar identifies the highest development of God's personality with precisely that stage of His unfolding which is nearest to human experience, indeed which is immanent and mysteriously present in every one of us."⁷⁴

The "I" of God is identified by many Kabbalists with Malkhut or "Kingdom." This is the tenth and "final" of the famous Kabbalistic Sephiroth, which are almost always depicted as circles and often shown grouped and interconnected in a diagram known as the "Tree of Life." The term Sephiroth first occurs in the Sefer Yezirah (Book of Creation), which is the earliest known text of Jewish

73. Halevi, 7.

74. Scholem, Major Trends, 216-17.

"speculative philosophy." The term Sephiroth (singular: sephirah) means "numbers." The Sephiroth are also sometimes called mekorot, "sources." We are reminded, of course, of Böhme's source-spirits, and in fact the Sephiroth play a role in Kabbalism strikingly like that played by the Quellgeister in Böhme's theosophy: they in some sense delineate the stages of God's progressive self-manifestation.

However, as Cordovero recognized, the crucial question is whether the Sephiroth are "moments" of the God who becomes manifest, or merely instruments or tools that God uses to express Himself. Cordovero argued that the Sephiroth are "organs" of God, which makes them one with God in essence, yet at the same time separate from Him, in the sense that my heart is a part of me, but it is not identical with me. Of course, the Sephiroth are not physical organs, so Cordovero tried to interpret them as "stages of the divine mind."⁷⁵ Cordovero also conceives the Sephiroth as expressing the underlying structure of nature itself and of every created being. Scholem writes that, "this tree of God [the Tree of Life] is also, as it were, the skeleton of the universe; it grows throughout the whole of creation and spreads its branches through all its ramifications. All mundane and created things exist only because something of the power of the Sephiroth lives and

75. Scholem, Ibid., 252; see also Scholem, Kabbalah, 102.

acts in them."⁷⁶ This idea is, of course, in essence identical to Böhme's conception of the "eternal nature" of the source-spirits as the nature of nature, as well as to Hegel's claim that the Logic constitutes the "animating soul" of nature (EL § 24 Z-2; Geraets, 58).

Other Kabbalists were more radical than Cordovero. In the thirteenth century, many held the view that the Sephiroth were, to use the Hegelian term, "moments" of God's essence itself, and not something distinct from God.⁷⁷ According to Scholem, the author of the Ma'arekhet ha-Elohut (a very early Kabbalist treatise) "was led to the daring conclusion that only the revealed God can in reality be called 'God,' and not the hidden deus absconditus, who cannot be an object of religious thought."⁷⁸ Even the Zohar does not make the Sephiroth "outside" God, but instead conceives the "emanation" of the Sephiroth as occurring within God.

As to the Sephiroth themselves and their structure, they are always presented in an hierarchical order which almost never varies in the works of the Kabbalists. Despite this hierarchy, each Sephirah is conceived of as being equally close to its "source" in Ein-Sof or Ayin. Thus, the hierarchy is artificial. Again, Böhme comes to mind: "These seven generatings in all are none of them the

76. Scholem, Major Trends, 214-15.

77. Scholem, Kabbalah, 101; see also 145.

78. Scholem, Ibid., 89.

first, the second, or the third, or last, but they are all seven, every one of them, both the first, second, third, fourth, and last. Yet I must set them down one after another, according to a creaturely way and manner, otherwise you could not understand it: For the Deity is as a wheel with seven wheels made one in another, wherein a man sees neither beginning nor end."⁷⁹ Oddly enough, instead of the familiar tree diagram, the Sephiroth are sometimes depicted as concentric circles, just like Böhme's wheels. Scholem says the following about the doctrine of the Sefer Yezirah: "it is emphasized that the ten Sephiroth constitute a closed unit, for 'their end is in their beginning and their beginning in their end' and they revolve in each other; i.e., these ten basic principles constitute a unity . . ."⁸⁰ Luria depicted the Sephiroth as concentric circles and, as I have said, it is Lurianic Kabbalah that influenced Böhme most strongly. (In fact, Lurianic Kabbalah incorporated both the linear and circular arrangement of Sephiroth, as we will see in Chapter Seven.) Scholem notes that, "From the 13th century onward we find the idea that each Sephirah comprises all others successively in an infinite reflection of the Sephiroth within themselves."⁸¹

79. Aurora, ch. 23, § 18; Sparrow, 615-616.

80. Scholem, Kabbalah, 24.

81. Ibid., 113.

The Sephiroth and their arrangement as the "Tree of Life" appear as follows (see Figure 11 for their interconnections, and also Figures 12-14):



The Sefer Yezirah refers to Keter as ru'ah, which can be translated as "aether" or "spirit." This is the point at which God in Himself, Ein-Sof, bursts into manifestation. This manifestation is thought of as a circuit running through the ten Sephiroth, and it is symbolized as a jagged flash of lightning, touching or "activating" each Sephirah, pictured as a circle or a bowl (recall Böhme's Schrack or "Flash"). Keter or "crown" is on some accounts Ayin or Nothing, on other accounts the One, or God's Supernal Will. What it is is perhaps all of these: it is blank One-ness, which is yet indeterminate and without character. In this tension between unity and indeterminacy is born a drive or a conatus toward a plurality of determination. This is represented by the

second Sephirah, Hohkmah or Wisdom, which is the "thought" of creation: the idea of all that is or can be.

Like everything in the Kabbalah, the doctrine of the Sephiroth is expressed in figurative language which is often difficult to interpret. Thus any interpretation is necessarily speculative. We can say with some assurance, however, that as a movement away from blank oneness and toward determination, Hohkmah is a determination of Oneness.⁸² I suggest that it represents the Universal as such: Hohkmah is the One-Nothing of Keter become a determinate nothingness. A universal is precisely a determinate nothingness: it is no thing at all, but rather an empty--yet determinate--form. Scholem writes that Hohkmah "represents the ideal thought of Creation, conceived as the ideal point which itself springs from the impulse of the abysmal will."⁸³ Thus, Hohkmah is a further determination of Keter, the Nothing that is at the same time Unity. Recall from Chapter One that for Böhme, Wisdom is the first stage of God's "othering" Himself, and it takes the form of the seven source-spirits. The further determination of Hohkmah is Binah, or "Understanding," sometimes referred to as the "Womb." Hohkmah is the Universal contracted into an undifferentiated whole. Binah represents the specification or particularization of the

82. See Aryeh Kaplan, editorial remark in his translation of The Bahir (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1979), 97.

83. Scholem, Major Trends, 219.

Universal.⁸⁴ It is the matrix in which the Wisdom of God, or the Idea of the Universal, becomes fully specified as a system of universals. It can easily be seen that these three Sephiroth are similar to the Plotinian trio of the One, Nous, and World Soul. Keter, Hokhmah and Binah are thought by the Kabbalist to be the three most important and ultimate of the Sephiroth (thus tempting Christian Kabbalists to identify them with the persons of the Trinity).

The seven remaining Sephiroth are conceived as representing the seven days of creation, and deal with aspects, in effect, of the created world born from the womb of Binah (some Kabbalists thus make a sharp distinction between the first three and the last seven Sephiroth, but as we have seen others identify all seven with the essence of God). Before passing on to the first of the seven, however, the lightning flash of manifestation passes through an anti-Sephirah or phantom Sephirah called Da'at. Da'at does not appear in Kabbalism until the thirteenth century. Scholem conjectures that, "This addition arose from the desire to see each group of three Sephiroth as a unit comprising opposing attributes and as a synthesis which finally resolved them."⁸⁵ In other words, Da'at was intended to be a third to Hokhmah and Binah, just as

84. Kaplan notes that Binah represents differentiation (Bahir, 97).

85. Scholem, Kabbalah, 107

Tiferet is a third to Gevurah and Hesed, and Yesod is a third to Hod and Nezah. Meaning literally "Knowledge," according to Scholem Da'at is supposed to represent the "external aspect of Keter," which is directly above Da'at on the Tree of Life.⁸⁶ What could this mean? Keter, we have seen is a will or a drive that is constituted by the tension of Nothing and Unity, or Indeterminacy and Determinacy. Da'at is sometimes referred to as the "temporal present," and Keter as "eternal now." I want to suggest that Da'at is time itself, conceived in opposition to Keter's "eternal now," which is, of course, outside of time. (We are reminded of Hegel's description of Time as "the Concept itself that is there" [Miller, 487; PG, 524]). Da'at is not a real part of the Tree of Life because the system of the Sephiroth is outside of time. Da'at is knowledge because it represents the "contact point" of the Kabbalist with the Sephiroth: our knowledge of God and the cosmos is a unity of Wisdom (Hokhmah) and Understanding (Binah), a knowledge of Wisdom through Understanding; we know the eternal in a sensuous way, and our knowledge is in time. Significantly, Da'at is also sometimes referred to as "Holy Spirit."

From Da'at we pass on to Hesed or Gedulah which is generally translated as "Mercy," and then across (on the Tree of Life) to Din or Gevurah ("Stern Judgement"). These

86. Ibid., 107.

represent the forces of Expansion and Contraction. The further specification of being takes place in the tension of Expansion and Contraction. As we saw in Chapter Two, Oetinger speaks of Expansion (Ausbreitung) and Contraction (Stärke), and identifies them explicitly with Hesed and Gevurah.⁸⁷ Goethe also makes use of these concepts. In the last chapter I discussed how in 1804-05, Hegel wrote out and then criticized a "myth" concerning the fall of Lucifer. He writes, "God, having turned toward nature and expressed Himself [hat sich ausgebreitet] in the pomp and dull repetition of its forms, became aware of His expansion [Expansion]. . . and became angry over it. Wrath [Zorn] is this formation, this contraction [Zusammennehmen] into an empty point. He finds Himself in this way, with His being poured out into the unending, restless infinity, where there is no present but an empty transcendence of limit, which always remains even as it is transcended."⁸⁸ Hegel identifies Wrath with contraction here. Similarly, the Kabbalah identifies Gevurah/Din with "fire," "wrath," and "severity."⁸⁹

87. "Durch die vierte [sephirah], Gedulah, breitet Er seine Kräften aus in sich selbst (Ps. 150, 1: Lobet ihn in der Ausbreitung seiner Kraft). Durch die fünfte, Gebhurah, intendiert und verfasst Er sie wieder zusammen, dass wir ihn in seinem [sic] Gebhurot, 'Kräften,' loben (Ps. 150, 1)" (Die Lehrtafel der Prinzessin Antonia 1:93).

88. Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung, hg. v. Johannes Hoffmeister (Stuttgart: Fr. Frommanns Verlag, 1936), 364-65.

89. Scholem, Major Trends, 237.

According to Kabbalah, Din is the origin of evil. Ordinarily, Din and Hesed balance each other: severity of judgement is balanced by mercy; sharp distinction, cutting-off or closedness is balanced by unity, embrace, or openness. However, as Scholem notes, "When [Din] ceases to be tempered, when in its measureless hypertrophical outbreak it tears itself loose from the quality of mercy, then it breaks away from God altogether and is transformed into the radically evil, into Gehenna and the dark world of Satan."⁹⁰ Hegel, in his "myth" of 1804-05, writes that, "The anger of God, here fixed outside Himself in His otherness, the fallen Lucifer, rose up against God and his beauty made him arrogant. Nature, through consciousness of its own form, brought it to completion and flattered itself over it."⁹¹ God's wrath, then, according to Hegel, becomes the spirit of Lucifer, who is at home with the finite and ephemeral. The same Kabbalistic conception of evil, as we have seen, is to be found in Böhme. Evil has its origin as a moment of God--negativity is sublated within the whole--but it is a moment "broken off," as it were, from the divine life.

Applied to human life, Din would represent what Hegel calls Desire--the urge to annihilate the other and absolutize the self. Böhme designates this way of being as "the Sour"--it is an indrawing, a pulling away, a shutting

90. Ibid., 237

91. Ibid., 365.

off and negation of all else. Both Böhme and the Kabbalah regard this as a necessary moment of the being of God and all creation. Everything good that subsequently comes to be, is only through having overcome this negative moment. This is, of course, Hegel's own position, as I discussed in the preceding chapter.

From Din, we proceed to Tiferet, which stands in the center of the Tree of Life, directly below Keter and Da'at. This center line is known as the "Pillar of Equilibrium." The Sephiroth standing in this pillar have a "reconciling function": Da'at in some sense reconciles Hokhmah and Binah, and Tiferet reconciles Hesed and Din (only Keter and Malkhut stand "outside" this pattern, as will shortly be accounted for). As the reconciliation of Hesed and Din, Tiferet is sometimes called Rahamim (especially in the Zohar) which means "compassion." Tiferet is usually translated as "Beauty" or "Adornment." It is also called "the King," and is masculine in character. Tiferet is also conceived as the "son" of Malkhut and Binah (in most diagrams of the Tree of Life, Tiferet is directly connected with Malkhut and Binah). Tiferet represents the Idea of the Universe: the self-expression of the infinite through sameness and difference, brought forth in expansion and contraction. But the process is not fully realized with Tiferet, however.

Nezah and Hod, the last two dyadic Sephiroth, both represent revelation or prophecy. Unfortunately, here Kabbalists become extremely obscure, making these two very hard to interpret. Their names are frequently translated as "Eternity" and "Reverberation" (often "Majesty"). Nezah and Hod appear to be the utterance or expression of the plan of God, a "reflection" back upon what has gone before, and a projection forward: the eternal structure of the first seven Sephiroth (including the phantom Sephirah Da'at) echoing forward through time. Nezah and Hod represent God as eternal, yet as unfolding in time. Yesod or "Foundation" contains all the preceding Sephiroth. It is depicted as the male sexual organ because it is supposed to be the channel through which all preceding Sephiroth "flow into" the final Sephirah, Malkhut.⁹²

Malkhut or "Kingdom" (sometimes "Glory") is conceived of as feminine--in contrast to the "male" Tiferet and Yesod (the "organ" of Tiferet)--and is often referred to under the alternate name of Shekhinah or "Divine Presence." If one looks at a drawing of the Tree of Life, Malkhut and Keter seem to stand apart from the others. Yesod and Malkhut are the only Sephiroth in the Pillar of Equilibrium that are not separated by dyadic Sephiroth, making Malkhut seem almost like an extension of the Tree, a sort of appendage. This is not accidental, for Malkhut represents

92. Ibid., 227-28.

the divine presence in the world: with Malkhut the Sephiroth have reached down into the world of space and time. I will discuss the Kabbalist concept of Malkhut or Shekhinah more fully in Chapter Seven, for it relates to Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit: Shekhinah is conceived as God embodied in the Keneset Yisrael, the "community of Israel," a doctrine remarkably like Hegel's theory of Objective Spirit.

In addition to the doctrine of the Sephiroth, traditional Kabbalah also teaches a doctrine of "four worlds": Atsiluth, Beriah, Yezirah, and Asiyah. The first of these is, in effect, the world of God "in Himself," the eternal, unchanging world of the Sephiroth. The others, however, are worlds "emanated" from the Sephiroth. In his discussion of Kabbalah in the Lectures, Hegel includes a brief account of the "four worlds," which is entirely accurate:

In the first place there came forth ten of such emanations, Sephiroth, forming the pure world of Azilut [die reine, azilutische Welt], which exists in itself and does not change. The second is the world of Briah [die briatische Welt], which does change. The third is the formed world of Jezirah [die geformte, jeziratische Welt], the world of pure spirits set in matter, the souls of the stars--that

is, further distinctions into which this dark wisdom proceeds. In the fourth place comes the created world, the Asiah [viertens die gemachte Welt, die asiahtische]: it is the lowest, the vegetative and sensible world [LHP II, 396; Werke 19, 427-428].

(d) Language and Method in the Kabbalah

Scholem discusses how Kabbalist thought can be considered a form of gnosticism, and then remarks, "at the same time, side by side with this Gnostic outlook, we find a most astonishing tendency to a mode of contemplative thought that can be called 'dialectic' in the strictest sense of the term as used by Hegel."⁹³ Scholem writes, further, that, "The process of emanation of the Sephiroth is described by Cordovero as dialectical. In order to be revealed, God has to conceal Himself. This concealment is in itself the coming into being of the Sephiroth. Only the Sephiroth reveal God, and that is why 'revealing is the cause of concealment and concealment is the cause of revealing.'"⁹⁴ Scholem refers to the structure of the Sephiroth as being "built out of triangles."⁹⁵ Aryeh Kaplan, in his commentary on the Bahir, quotes the last of the "Thirteen Principles of Exegesis" of Rabbi Ishmael:

93. Scholem, Kabbalah, 143.

94. Ibid., 402.

95. Ibid., 107

"Two verses oppose one another until a third verse is brought to reconcile them." Kaplan comments: "It is this dialectic that results in the basic triplet structure so often found in Kabbalah."⁹⁶ We have already seen examples of this, in the triadic structure of the transitions in the Sephiroth: how Hokhmah and Binah are reconciled by Da'at, Hesed and Din by Tiferet, etc. The Bahir itself echoes this: "A third verse comes and reconciles the two. It is written (Psalms 139:12), 'Even darkness is not dark to you. Night shines like day--light and darkness are the same.'"⁹⁷

Unlike other varieties of mysticism, Kabbalah has a very positive attitude toward language, and does not regard it as a barrier to understanding. Kabbalists claimed that Hebrew was not only the language of Adam, but of God Himself (after all, the Bible records Him as speaking in Hebrew, does it not?). Böhme wrote of a *Natursprache*, the language of Adam. The Kabbalists' attitude toward language resulted in strange methods of Biblical exegesis, in which literally every jot and tittle were regarded as significant. It also resulted in meditative methods such as gematria, the science of attaining wisdom (and sometimes occult powers) through the substitution of numbers for the letters in words of power.⁹⁸ Abraham Abulafia was one of

96. Kaplan, editorial remark in Bahir, 87.

97. Bahir, para. 1; Kaplan, 1.

98. J.L. Blau discusses Reuchlin's use of gematria. See his The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1944), 8.

the most famous practitioners of gematria. Abulafia, interestingly enough, called the Christian Trinity "a lie and a deception," but nevertheless referred to "intellect" as having three aspects, God, Son of God, and Holy Spirit!⁹⁹

According to Scholem, Abulafia believed that gematria is a "mystical logic" which "corresponds to the inner harmony of thought in its movement towards God."¹⁰⁰ Abulafia and his followers also employed a method they called dillug or kefitsch, "jumping" or "skipping." The skipping was from one idea to another. Quoting Scholem again, "this is nothing else than a very remarkable method of using associations as a way of meditation. It is not wholly the 'free play of association' as known to psychoanalysis; rather it is the way of passing from one association to another determined by certain rules which are, however, sufficiently lax. Every 'jump' opens a new sphere, defined by certain formal, not material characteristics."¹⁰¹ This sounds similar, of course, to speculative philosophy and its use of dialectic. As I have shown, the transitions in Hegel's system are exactly such "jumps" or "skips." Hegel's transitions are not deductive, but seem to be guided by an intuition of associations and correspondences.

99. See Scholem, Major Trends, 129, 380 n37.

100. Ibid., 134.

101. Ibid., 136.

The Kabbalists believe that by manipulating the language of Adam they are recovering the wisdom he possessed and then lost in the Fall. Scholem writes that, "Man, as he was before his fall, is conceived as a cosmic being which contains the whole world in itself and whose station is superior even to that of Metatron, the first of the angels."¹⁰² The Sephiroth Tiferet and Malkhut are identified with, respectively, the Tree of Life and Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil from the Garden of Eden. Adam's sin consisted in "separating" the two trees and choosing to "worship" only the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, or Shekhinah. Here again, there is a remarkable similarity to Böhme. We saw in Chapter One how for Böhme the Tree of Good and Evil represents disharmony, a separation of the spirits of nature into units under the sway of the "Eternal No," withdrawn into themselves, spurning unity. Thinking that it would provide him with the wisdom he sought, Adam naively ate of this tree.¹⁰³ Adam's action constituted a turning away from divine unity. As I pointed out in the Introduction, another plausible translation of what is called "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" is "Tree of the Knowledge of All Things."¹⁰⁴

As we saw in Chapter One, Böhme holds the view-- identical to Kabbalism--that before his fall, Adam was

102. Ibid., 279

103. Mysterium Magnum, ch. 18, § 33.

104. Cf. Rabbi J.H. Hertz, The Pentateuch and Haftorahs (London: Soncino Press, 1961), 8 n9; and 10 n5.

privy to the Wisdom of God, "But yet when he fell, and was set into the outward birth or geniture, he knew it no more, but kept it in remembrance only as a dark and veiled story; and this he left to his posterity." Böhme also ascribes supernatural powers to Adam. For instance, Adam, who was originally androgynous, could procreate at will by the power of imagination, could exist without eating or sleeping, and could alter the essences of objects through magic words.¹⁰⁵ The Kabbalist view of Adam is very similar although somewhat more complicated, as we will see in Chapter Seven.

5. Ramon Lull and the Tradition of Pansophia

In the foregoing I have argued, in effect, that although there is a Böhmean influence on the Logic and on Hegel's conception of system, the deeper influence is that of the Kabbalah. Böhme is a Christian Kabbalist, and so there is an indirect influence of the Kabbalah on Hegel, by way of Böhme. Also, Hegel read Brucker's extensive account of the Kabbalah, and, as I will argue in Chapter Seven, he probably also read Rosenroth's Kabbala Denudata. There are other possible channels of influence, however: the writings of Reuchlin, whom Hegel discusses very briefly in the lectures, as well as those of Baader, and, of course, the

105. Mysterium Magnum, ch. 17, § 43.

tradition of Christian Kabbalism in Württemberg as represented pre-eminently by Oetinger. In this final section, however, I will discuss a wholly different influence, that of Ramon Lull and the ideal of pansophia or encyclopedism. As we shall see, at a certain point Lullism crosses paths with Christian Kabbalah.

Lull was born in Majorca in 1235 and, after many travels and adventures, died there in 1316. In his early life, Lull was a courtier with no formal training as a scholar. He lived a life of pleasure-seeking until, in 1272, he had a mystical vision on Mount Randa in Majorca. His vision revealed to him the "attributes of God" in all their glory, radiating out into creation. Lull was inspired to create an art based on these attributes which would allow one to know God and achieve total understanding of all that exists.

Lull believed that his Art was based upon ideas common to the three great religions of the West, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.¹⁰⁶ At the same time, the Art is supposed to constitute a "science of sciences," a super-science consisting of the ultimate truths of reality which

106. Lull was influenced by Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi (1165-124), who was one of the founders of "theosophical Sufism." He believed that reality is a progressive realization of God's self-knowledge. See Dan Merkur, Gnosis: An Esoteric Tradition of Mystical Visions and Unions (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 246. Merkur writes: "Lull's debts to Ibn al-'Arabi were so extensive as to amount occasionally to plagiarism" (Ibid.).

can be used to order all existing knowledge.¹⁰⁷ The parallel to Hegel's Logic, which Hegel believed could "order" all the scientific knowledge of his day and reveal its place in the divine whole, is obvious.¹⁰⁸

The attributes or Names of God are, according to Lull, Bonitas, Magnitudo, Eternitas, Potestas, Sapientia, Voluntas, Virtus, Veritas, and Gloria (Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, Power, Wisdom, Will, Virtue, Truth, and Glory). These he designated with the letters B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and K. Lull employed these letters in diagrams, usually around the edge of circles. These circles function as "wheels": by turning the wheels, each inscribed with the letters, new combinations of the letters could be arrived at, each of which bore some ontological or cosmological significance. This procedure generally involved the manipulation of three wheels--or some other such device--yielding triadic combinations of letters: BBB, BBC, CFG, GDC, etc.

107. See Paolo Rossi, "The Legacy of Ramon Lull in Sixteenth-Century Thought," Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies, 5 (1961): 181-213, 185.

108. As we shall see in the following chapter, one of the grossest myths about Hegel's thought is that he thought he could "deduce" knowledge about the empirical world. Rather, his Philosophy of Nature constitutes an ordering of empirical data. The same myth exists concerning Aristotle's science, and has been decisively refuted in recent years by authors working on Aristotle's biology.

Lull placed great emphasis on the Trinity and trinitarian structure.¹⁰⁹ Anthony Bonner writes that, "it was Lull's idea to show that the Christian mysteries were part of the very structure of the universe, which would therefore be incomplete or imperfect without them."¹¹⁰ Lull believed that through the contemplation of triadic combinations of the divine Names, we could ascend in thought to the Trinity of Father-Son-Holy Spirit itself. As we have seen, Hegel's system is pervaded by triadic structures which are all "modelled on" or reflect the primary triad of Logic-Nature-Spirit, which in turn is patterned after the Christian Trinity.

Lull was a prolific author who wrote on a very wide variety of subjects, including the natural sciences. No matter what subject he happened to take up, however, Lull's account always followed the pattern of laying out its central parts in terms of the attributes B to K. It is obvious that Lull was employing an analogical method in his "complete speech," involving appeal to fundamental correspondences or, as Bonner puts it, "arguments of

109. See Ibid., 178-79; See also R.D. F. Pring-Mill, "The Trinitarian World Picture of Ramon Lull," Romantisches Jahrbuch 7 (1955-56): 229-56.

110. Anthony Bonner, Editor's Introduction in Doctor Illuminatus: A Ramon Llull Reader (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 51. Recall, yet again, J.N. Findlay's observation that "[Hegel's] whole system may in fact be regarded as an attempt to see the Christian mysteries in everything whatever, every natural process, every form of human activity, and every logical transition." See Findlay, Hegel: A Re-Examination (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 131.

congruence."¹¹¹ Again, there is a clear parallel to Hegel. I have already had occasion in this chapter to remark on the "architectonic" structure of Hegel's system, in which each major subdivision reflects the triadic structure of the whole, and in which there are detailed conceptual analogues and correspondences between the parts of the different "Sciences" (e.g., the correspondence between "Consciousness" in the Phenomenology and the "doctrine of Being" in the Logic). Lull claims that his Art is neither logic nor metaphysics.¹¹² This probably means that, like Hegel's Logic, it is both: a means to order and make sense out of all our other knowledge, and at the same time itself the most fundamental kind of knowledge.

I said earlier that Lull employs circles or wheels to represent combinations of the divine names. Actually, three geometrical figures are used by Lull: the circle, the triangle, and the square. The circle represents the heavens (no doubt because of the "spheres" and the circular movements of the planets), the triangle, divinity, and the square the four elements. As an example of Lull's fusion of logic and metaphysics, he attempts to map the four elements onto the four categorical propositions of the traditional "Square of Opposition." His most common image, however, combines the circle with the triangle. Figure 17, Lull's most famous diagram, shows a circle ringed round

111. Ibid., 51.

112. See Ars Brevis, part 10, n40.

with B to K, joined in myriad triadic combinations by triangles drawn within the circle. Yates says of this that it is "a mystical figure in which we meditate on the complex relations of the Names with one another as they are in the Godhead, before extension into the creation, and as aspects of the Trinity."¹¹³ Apparently, Lull and his followers actually made "wheels" of his concentric circles so that they could turn the circles and produce new revelations about the nature of God and the cosmos.

Lull is often treated as a Kabbalist and located in the tradition of Christian Kabbalah. Many Lull scholars hotly dispute this. I agree with Frances Yates, however, that an influence of Kabbalism on Lull was certainly possible. As Yates points out, the concept of the "Names of God" is fundamental to Jewish mysticism. The Zohar was, of course, written in Spain during Lull's lifetime. Lull's practice of combining and recombining B to K and contemplating these combinations is similar to Abulafia's meditative practices.¹¹⁴ Pico della Mirandola himself pointed this out.¹¹⁵ Scholem speaks of Abulafia's method as a "mystical logic," and writes that, "From the motion of the letters of thought result the truths of reason."¹¹⁶

113. Frances Yates, The Art of Memory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 181.

114. According to Dan Merkur, Abulafia had his followers visualize the letter combinations on a rotating wheel (Merkur, 249).

115. Yates, Art of Memory, 177; 188-89.

116. Scholem, Major Trends, 134-35. Arthur Edward Waite, in his eccentric but ambitious study of the Kabbalah,

Hegel devotes about two pages to Lull in his Lectures, grouping him with John Charlier, Ramon of Sabunde, and Roger Bacon as Mystiker of the scholastic variety (Lull receives the most extensive treatment).¹¹⁷ Hegel writes that, "The chief object aimed at in this man's 'Art' was an enumeration and arrangement of the various concepts under which all objects fall, or of the pure categories according to which they can be determined, so that it may be possible in regard to every object to indicate with ease the conceptions applicable to it. Lullus is so systematic that he becomes at times mechanical. He constructed a diagram in circles, on which were marked triangles through which the circles pass" (LHP III, 93; Werke 19, 586). In the Science of Logic, in the "Doctrine of the Concept," Hegel states that the "Leibnizian application of the calculus of combinations and permutations to the syllogism and to the combination of other notions, differed from the notorious Art of Lull [der verrufenen Lullianischen Kunst] solely in being more methodical on the arithmetical side, but for the rest, they were both equally meaningless" (Miller, 685; WL III, 128).

This remark must be understood in the context of the Science of Logic, in which Hegel is rejecting all

disputes any influence of Kabbalism on Lull. Waite, The Holy Kabbalah (New York: Citadel Press, 1992), 440, 442. 117. Hegel states in general of the group, "Among them genuine philosophy is to be found--termed also Mysticism; it tends to inwardness and bears a great resemblance to Spinozism" (LHP III, 91; Werke 19, 584).

"abstract" conceptions of philosophy which oppose method to subject matter, a defect present in Lull. Elsewhere, Hegel is more positive. In his discussion of Bruno, Hegel anticipates Frances Yates's work by connecting Bruno with Lull: "The main endeavour of Bruno was . . . to represent the All and One [das All und Eine], after the method of Lullus, as a system of classes of regular determinations" (LHP III 134-135; Werke 20, 36). Earlier in his remarks on Bruno, Hegel glosses the Lullian Art as "the art of finding differences in the Idea" (LHP III, 123; Werke 20, 31). This is highly significant, for what is so striking about Hegel's Logic is precisely the idea that it constitutes an articulation of the moments of God or Absolute Idea. Hegel cannot have simply dismissed Lull's thought if he regarded it as a precursor to his own in this significant respect.¹¹⁸ In his remarks on Spinoza, Hegel states that, "Lullus and Bruno attempted to draw up a system of form, which should embrace and comprehend the one substance which organizes itself into the universe; this attempt Spinoza did not make" (LHP III, 287; Werke 20, 194).

Frances Yates devotes a chapter in her Art of Memory to Lull and attempts to locate him within the tradition of ars memoria. However, she notes that Lull's art is devoid of the dramatic images of the classical ars memoria.

118. As noted earlier, Hegel states that God "posits determinations within Himself" (LPR I, 307; VPR I, 212).

Instead, it employs, as we have seen, an abstract letter notation.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, Lull does belong to the tradition of ars memoria because he conceives his Art as an art of memory through which we can recollect Truth.¹²⁰ We have seen that for Hegel Mnemosyne is the "absolute muse", because the philosopher as well as the poet may hear her voice, and through her come to speak the complete speech. As I have said before, genuine philosophy is uncreative. It is an expression of a wisdom that is already there. The entire Hegelian system is a recollection of eternal, as well as historical truth.

Donald Phillip Verene has drawn a parallel between the traditional ars memoria and the Phenomenology of Spirit, exploiting the famous line at the end of the Phenomenology where Hegel speaks of the work as a "gallery of images" (Galerie von Bildern) (Miller, 492; PG, 530).¹²¹ The traditional ars memoria employed striking images arranged in systematic order in order to cause the onlooker to "recollect" the wisdom already latent in him. The best example of this is the "memory theatre" of Giulio Camillo (ca. 1480-1544), which appears to have been a small, walk-

119. Yates, Art of Memory, 176

120. See Frances Yates, "The Art of Ramon Lull: An Approach to it Through Lull's Theory of the Elements," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 17 (1964): 115-73;

162. Also, Yates, Art of Memory, 174.

121. Donald Phillip Verene, "Two Sources of Philosophical Memory: Vico Versus Hegel" in Philosophical Imagination and Cultural Memory, ed. Patricia Cook (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 41.

in amphitheatre decorated with various combinations of archetypal images, underneath which were small drawers containing scrolls covered in further images or, perhaps, aphorisms or "abstracts" of the works of great thinkers. In the words of a sceptical contemporary of Camillo, working one's way through the entire theatre was supposed to produce a transformation of the mind, "in such a way that the beholder may at once perceive with his eyes everything that is otherwise hidden in the depths of the human mind."¹²² Camillo's ideal was basically the same as that later championed by Descartes and the rationalists: knowledge unified and organized around certain fundamental ideas.

Verene has Camillo in mind when he compares the Phenomenology to a "theatre of memory," but he does not extend the parallel to apply to the entire Hegelian system. In fact, the ars memoria which the system Logic-Nature-Spirit most resembles is not that of Camillo but that of Lull. Insofar as speculative philosophy may be located within the ars memoria tradition, Lull's can be seen as a kind of "bridge position." Whereas the traditional ars memoria is bound up with sensuous images, Lull's Art is "abstract," employing a quasi-algebraic notation and a "method." As I argued in Chapter Three, Hegel sublates "picture thinking" and "abstract reason," and produces a

122. The writer is Viglius Zuichemus, in a 1532 letter to Erasmus, quoted in Ibid., 132.

new type of philosophy which employs what are normally termed "abstract concepts" in an organic system of thought governed by the Urbilder of the circle, triangle, and square. Lull comes very close to this Hegelian position. He rejects, in the main, the sensuous images of the ars memoria, but retains its ideal of universal knowledge and knowledge of God. He produces a new system of thought which is both logic and metaphysics, which aims--as Hegel himself saw--at knowing the "moments" of God, and which is structured according to the circle, the triangle, and the square. But he separates form and content, and in practice his Art degenerates into an extreme formalism in which an external "method" is imposed on a pre-given subject matter.

As to Lull's influence on the tradition, for some time those who expressed an interest in his work were subject to persecution. Nicholas of Cusa was very much interested in the Art, but could not say so publicly.¹²³ Lull had a tremendous impact during the Renaissance on figures such as Pico, who expressly stated his desire to fuse Lull's Art with Kabbalism. It was thus during this period, as Frances Yates notes, that Lullism became "assimilated to various aspects of the Hermetic-Cabalist tradition."¹²⁴ A very large number of pseudo-Lullian alchemical works were published after Lull's death, beginning in about 1332. As

123. Bonner, 58. Merkur notes that Cusa's library contained more works by Lull than of any other author (Merkur, 250).

124. Yates, Art of Memory, 188

a result, by the fifteenth century, Lull was almost universally regarded as a great alchemist. Hegel himself reports on Lull's "strong inclination toward alchemy" (LHP III, 192; Werke 19, 585)--but there is not the slightest evidence for this. The first man to teach Lull's Art publicly was Bernard de Lavinheta (d. ca. 1530), at the University of Paris. Bernard's Explanatio compendiosaque applicatio artis Raymundi Lulli (1523) melded Lull with pansophia, alchemy, and the ars memoria.¹²⁵ The first German commentator on Lull was Agrippa, who wrote In Artem brevem Raymundi Lulli Commentaria (first published in 1531). Bruno, as has already been mentioned, was greatly influenced by Lull and wrote seven books on the Art (see Figure 18). Interestingly, he first took up Lull after his time in Germany (1586-88). Leibniz was also apparently interested in Lull.

In truth, Lull's Art belongs to the tradition of pansophia, "universal wisdom," a term which seems first to have been used by the Renaissance Hermetic philosopher Francesco Patrizzi but which describes a tradition much older. As we saw in the Introduction, the ideal of the "complete speech" or "perfect discourse" (teleeis logos) is a fundamental tenet of Hermeticism. Not only was pansophia an ideal of the Renaissance neo-Hermeticists, it also came

125. Bonner, 65.

to be closely associated with Rosicrucianism. Fludd, for instance, spoke of pansophia.

A typical representative of pansophia is Jan Amos Komensky, called Comenius (1592-1670). A native of Moravia, Comenius considered himself a Rosicrucian. He was greatly influenced by Andreae's manifestoes, and associated himself openly with "Rosicrucian" circles. Comenius was also influenced by Cusa, Paracelsus, Patrizzi, Campanella, and Fludd.¹²⁶ He received his education at Heidelberg University, from which he graduated in 1613. Yates conjectures that Comenius might have met Andreae while in Heidelberg. The development of a pansophic encyclopedia of universal knowledge was Comenius's goal in life. He called his first attempt, begun in 1614, an "Amphitheatre" of all existence.¹²⁷ Comenius's writings deal with philosophy, science, theology, politics, education, and other subjects. In 1623 he produced The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart. Considered one of the classics of Czech literature, it contains passages lifted from Andreae's Rosicrucian writings, as well as a chapter devoted to Rosicrucianism. The book is similar to Campanella's City of the Sun in its description of a utopian city representing all the departments of learning.

126. See Dagmar Capková, "Comenius and His Ideals: Escape from the Labyrinth" in Samuel Hartlib and Universal Reformation, ed. Mark Greengrass, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 76

127. Frances Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment (London: Routledge and Kegan-Paul, 1972), 157.

Comenius believed he had discovered a means to achieve knowledge of all things. He developed an ontology and cosmology grounded in the threefold distinction of Divine Word, Nature and Man. According to Dagmar Capková, this ontology "promised to reveal the common principles, relationships and differences concerning everything, on the basis of which people would learn the truth and how to act in accordance with it."¹²⁸ His pansophic encyclopedia was supposed to harmonize microcosm and macrocosm and unite man with God. He attempted to combine a transcendent with an immanent view of God, holding that while God is present in Nature, He also possesses a transcendent dimension. Comenius's thought can to some extent be called dialectical. He attempted to show how apparently incompatible concepts can be reconciled, and stressed that a proper understanding of the relations between whole and parts, universal and particular, and individual and society is a central feature of wisdom, and a pre-requisite for reform. Comenius advocated the creation of a "Universal College" which would pursue the ideal of pansophia and lead to "the reform of the whole world." These are, of course, the fundamental ideals of the Rosicrucian movement.¹²⁹

Comenius was associated with two other pansophists, Samuel Hartlib (1595-1662), and John Dury (1595-1680).

¹²⁸. Capková, 83.

¹²⁹. The Rosicrucians often spoke of an "Invisible College."

Hartlib, a Pole, had been the leader of a mystical society in Elbing. In 1628 he fled Poland and settled in England, where he established a school inspired by Rosicrucian ideals in Chichester (he is also reputed to have founded in 1646 a Rosicrucian "Invisible College"). Hartlib translated two works by Andreae into English (Christianae societas imago--see Chapter Two--and Christiani amoris dextera porrecta) and in 1641 composed a utopia, A Description of the Famous Kingdom of Macaria. Dury, a Scotsman who corresponded with Andreae, had made Hartlib's acquaintance when the latter was still in Elbing. All three men were given to millenarianism, Hartlib writing that, "Certainly God hase some special aime in bringing this notion of a Pansophical learning into the world," for it was to be, "a preparation for that happy promised state of God's church and a forerunner to bring men that blessed and wished for unity and union by stating of all the universal principles aright."¹³⁰

According to Stephen Clucas, Hartlib did not entirely admire Comenius's approach to pansophia, and felt that Comenius would benefit by joining forces with an Anglo-German systematic philosopher named Joachim Hübner.¹³¹ Millenarian tendencies, in fact, flourished among the German "systematics" of the period (Clucas names Alsted,

¹³⁰. Quoted in Stephen Clucas, "In Search of 'The True Logick': Methodological Eclecticism Among the Baconian Reformers" in Samuel Hartlib and Universal Reformation, 53.
¹³¹. Ibid., 53.

Polanus, and Bisterfield) who attempted to marry rationalism with ars memoria, pansophia, and mathesis universalis.¹³² German proponents of mathesis universalis such as Jungius believed that their new super-science would restore the wisdom lost with Adam's fall.¹³³ As we have seen, this is a key tenet of Kabbalism.

Comenius, Hartlib, and Dury were all greatly influenced by the work of Francis Bacon (1561-1626). Paolo Rossi has argued that Bacon's thought must be understood in the context of Renaissance Hermeticism,¹³⁴ and Frances Yates, in The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, has argued convincingly for the influence of Rosicrucianism on Bacon (his New Atlantis contains Rosicrucian imagery).¹³⁵ As Yates notes, Bacon's "great instauration" of science

was directed towards a return to the state of Adam before the Fall, a state of pure and sinless contact with nature and knowledge of her powers. This was the view of scientific progress, a progress back towards Adam, held by Cornelius Agrippa, the author of the influential Renaissance textbook on occult philosophy [De occulta philosophia]. And Bacon's science is still, in part, occult science. Amongst the subjects

132. Ibid., 54

133. Ibid., 63

134. Paolo Rossi, Francis Bacon: From Magic to Science (London, 1968).

135. See Yates, Rosicrucian Enlightenment, 127-29

which he reviews in his survey of learning are natural magic, astrology, of which he seeks a reformed version, alchemy, by which he was profoundly influenced, fascination, the tool of the magician, and other themes which those interested in drawing out the modern side of Bacon have set aside as unimportant.¹³⁶

In Novum Organum (1622), Bacon called for a radically new logic, one which would deal with "the particulars themselves, and their series and order," and rejected the sterile formalism of the schoolmen.

Leibniz, of course, hungered after such a new logic. His project was bound up with the creation of a universal science or encyclopedia which would unify and systematize all knowledge. To repeat a quotation from Chapter One, in his "Introduction to a Secret Science" (Introductio ad Encyclopaediam arcanum) (ca. 1679) Leibniz writes that "General Science,"

includes not only what has hitherto been regarded as logic, but also the art of discovery, together with method or the means of arrangement, synthesis and analysis, didactics, or the science of teaching, Gnostologia (the so-called Noologia), the art of memory or mnemonics, the Art of Combination, the Art

136. Ibid., 119-20

of Subtlety, and philosophical grammar; the Art of Lull, the Cabala of the wise, and natural magic.

Perhaps it also includes Ontology, or the science of something and nothing, being and not being, the thing and its mode, and substance and accident. It does not make much difference how you divide the sciences, for they are one continuous body, like the ocean.¹³⁷

In short, Leibniz falls squarely within the tradition of pansophia. This aspect of his work is generally considered an embarrassment by most Leibniz scholars, and is seldom discussed. However, the evidence of Leibniz's ties to Hermeticism is overwhelming. As I discussed in Chapter Two, Leibniz may even have been a member of a Rosicrucian society. (As I also discussed in Chapter Two, Leibniz was influenced by the peculiar Hermetic philosopher and alchemist Francis Mercury van Helmont, whose contribution to the Kabbala Denudata, mentioned earlier, was a dialogue in which he discussed a new concept of matter and employed the term "monad."¹³⁸)

The tradition of pansophia overlaps with the tradition of encyclopedism, the term frequently used to describe Leibniz's project. Hegel invited his contemporaries to

137. G.W. Leibniz, "Introduction to a Secret Science" in Philosophical Writings, ed. G.H.R. Parkinson, trans. Mary Morris and G.H.R. Parkinson (London: Everyman, 1973), 5-6.
 138. For a detailed discussion of the influence of Helmont and the Kabbalah on Leibniz, see Allison Coudert, Leibniz and the Kabbalah (Boston: Kluwer, 1995).

identify him with this tradition by entitling his third book Enzyklopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse. The traditions of pansophia and encyclopedism were still very much alive in Hegel's Württemberg (as I shall discuss in Chapter Seven, Oetinger and Schelling both fall within the pansophic tradition). The most famous encyclopedia in Hegel's time, of course, was the Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné, des sciences, des arts et des métiers of Diderot and d'Alembert (published 1751-1772 in thirty-five volumes).

In the Introduction to his Encyclopedia, Hegel writes "The philosophical encyclopedia distinguishes itself from the other, ordinary encyclopedia because the latter has to be some sort of aggregate of sciences, which are taken up contingently and empirically; and among them there are also some 'sciences' only in name, since they are themselves no more than a mere collection of bits of information" (EL § 16; Geraets, 39-40). (Hegel offers heraldry as one example of a pseudo-science.) His Encyclopedia differs from the ordinary sort not only in being an integrated, internally-related body of knowledge, but also in eschewing everything that has the status of mere observation, mere empirical data. The Encyclopedia does, of course, deal with empirical data--in the philosophies of Nature and Spirit--but only such data as illustrate the fundamental eidetic moments of these subjects (Hegel writes in the same

paragraph that the Encyclopedia "has to be restricted to the beginnings and the fundamental concepts of the particular sciences" [EL § 16; Geraets, 39]).

I said in Chapter Three that Hegel's Encyclopedia is exactly what its title promises: an "en-circlement." It is thus the true encyclopedia. It is the true pansophia Patrizzi, Comenius, Hartlib and Dury only dreamt of, setting the stage for the coming of the Age of the Holy Spirit and the end of history. It is Comenius's teaching of Divine Word, Nature and Man become Logic, Nature, and Spirit. It is Leibniz's "innocent magia," and mathesis universalis; his "Gnostologia", and his "ontology"--"the science of something and nothing, being and not-being"--all presented as "one continuous body, like the ocean." It is the ultimate Germanification of Lull's Art aimed at by Alsted, Polanus, and Bisterfield. It is the science of sciences and the true teaching of the "names" (provisional definitions, moments) of God. It is the ars memoria absolutum. It is the recovery of the Wisdom of Adam--the intimate knowledge Adam had of God "in Himself," "in His eternal essence"--and thus the vindication of the nostalgia of the Kabbalists, of Agrippa, Böhme, Bacon, Jungius, Leibniz, Helmont, etc. It contains the true logic Bacon sought. It is the Kabbalah of the Absolute Religion, Leibniz's "Cabala of the wise," the teachings of Pico, Reuchlin, Böhme, and Oetinger become wissenschaftlich.

CHAPTER SIX:

**THE ALCHEMIST'S LABORATORY: THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE AND
PHILOSOPHY OF SUBJECTIVE SPIRIT**

"Nature is a Hebrew word written only with consonants;
it is left to the understanding to add the points."

--J. G. Hamann¹

1. Hegel and Schelling's Early Naturphilosophie

I began the last chapter with a quote from Eric Voegelin about Hegel's "magic circle." In the same piece, Voegelin refers to the Phenomenology of Spirit as a grimoire. He might also have accurately described the "scientific" portion of the Encyclopedia--the Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of Subjective Spirit--as an alchemical manual, a Tabula Smaragdina for the modern age. This is, of course, a scandalous claim, one that this chapter will be devoted to supporting. It is a claim that would have warmed Voegelin's heart (for he was a caustic critic of Hegel's "gnosticism") as well as the hearts of all those who have dismissed Hegel's scientific writings as charlatanry and pseudo-science.

The attacks on the Philosophy of Nature, however, are seldom made by informed critics. It is simply assumed by

1. Hegel quotes this line in his lectures on the Philosophy of Nature (PN § 246, Z; Petry I, 201). As Petry notes, scholars of Hamann have not been able to locate the remark in his extant works. See Petry, PN I, 296-97.

most that Hegel's science is a product of armchair, a priori theorizing. The example most often appealed to is Hegel's alleged proof in his doctoral dissertation, De Orbitus Planetarum (1801), that there are--and must be--only seven planets.² Thanks to the research of J.M. Petry, E.E. Harris, H.S. Harris, and others, scholars are being forced to revise their views about Hegel's Philosophy of Nature and, perhaps most encouragingly, to acknowledge the necessity of reading it. I will not rehearse here the reasons why the received view is inadequate, but I will offer a couple of significant quotations. In the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel writes that, "the relationship of speculative science to the other sciences is simply the following: speculative science does not leave the empirical content of the other sciences aside, but recognises and uses it, and in the same way recognises and employs what is universal in these sciences, [i.e.,] the laws, classifications, etc., for its own content; but it also introduces other categories into these universals and gives them currency" (EL § 9; Geraets, 33). Secondly, Hegel makes an even more striking assertion in the Philosophy of

2. This is one of the "myths" that surround Hegel. It has been decisively refuted by H.S. Harris, Hegel's Development Vol. II: Night Thoughts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983): See Pierre Adler in his commentary and translation of Philosophical Dissertation on the Orbits of the Planets (1801) Preceded by the 12 Theses Defended on August 27, 1801, Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal 1 (1987): 269-309; and Bertrand Beaumont, "Hegel and the Seven Planets," The Hegel Myths and Legends, ed. Jon Stewart (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1996), and others.

Nature: "philosophy must accord with the experience nature gives rise to; in its formation and in its development, philosophic science presupposes and is conditioned by empirical physics" (PN § 246; Petry I, 197).

Hegel's Philosophy of Nature³ is not, of course, a mere catalogue of empirical data culled from the science of his day. Instead it is an organization and explanation of that data according to the categories of the Logic. Hegel is entirely aware of the "open-ended" nature of his discussion: namely, that the science he is dealing with is not "final." Nevertheless, he regards the skeletal structure into which he has fitted science as final, because it is a reflection of the eternal Idea. In the Dissertation Hegel states that, "the study and knowledge of the laws of nature rest on nothing other than our believing that nature has been formed by reason [ratio] and our being convinced of the identity of all laws of nature."⁴ This is a statement that even the most empirically-oriented

3. In the interest of brevity, I will sometimes refer simply to Philosophy of Nature where I have in mind Hegel's entire treatment of empirical science, including Subjective Spirit, the Dissertation, the early lectures on Philosophy of Nature, etc. The context will make it clear when I am referring exclusively to the Encyclopedia Philosophy of Nature.

4. Adler, 301; Adler is employing Georg Lasson's edition of the Dissertation which has his German translation and the original Latin on facing pages. See G.W.F. Hegel, Sämtliche Werke, Vol. 1, Erste Druckschriften (Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1928). I shall refer to this as "Lasson" and will indicate both the Latin and German, the even numbers being the Latin pages, the odd numbers the German; 398-399.

scientist could not disagree with: the assumption of all science is that nature is rational, that it possesses a definite order, and behaves regularly, and that we can therefore use our own rationality to comprehend it. Hegel claims nothing more than this. Because he believes that he has uncovered in his Logic an eternal, objective order (a "map", if you will, of the realm of forms) he expects that nature can be shown, with a little insight and imagination, to conform to it.

As we have seen, however, Hegel's Logic is heavily influenced by the theosophy of Böhme and Oetinger, the pansophia of Lull and Comenius, as well as the Kabbalah. Consequently, in so far as Hegel interprets the data of science through the lens of his Logic, he has melded science with what is usually called "pseudo-science." J.M. Petry writes that, "For Hegel . . . the Idea of Nature involves a combination of the Baconian and Böhmean attitudes to natural phenomena."⁵ According to David Walsh, "What Hegel set out to do was to integrate the rationality of modern science with the penumbra of larger spiritual expectations which have also been an abiding feature of the modern world. It is perhaps the most impressive attempt at reconciling science with pseudo-science."⁶

5. J.M. Petry, Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Nature (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), vol. I, 114.

6. David Walsh, "A Mythology of Reason: The Persistence of Pseudo-Science in the Modern World," in Science, Pseudo-

Hegel's Philosophy of Nature is also a revival of an older, specifically Aristotelian way of thinking about nature, which the modern scientists of Hegel's day considered to be completely worthless and dead. In particular, the Philosophy of Nature can be seen as a sophisticated, modern version of the "great chain of being."⁷ On Hegel's account, nature is seen to "give way" to Spirit, which "constitutes the truth and ultimate purpose of nature, and the true actuality of Idea" (PN § 251; Petry I, 216).⁸ Hegel understands each "level" or "moment" of nature in very Aristotelian terms: as constituting an approach to--one might even say imitation of--Absolute Idea's actualization as Spirit. Just as in Aristotle, each level of nature "strives" to be an independent, self-sufficient "system," like the Absolute Idea.⁹

Science, and Utopianism in Early Modern Thought, ed. Stephen McKnight (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 159.

7. See Harris, Night Thoughts, 374.

8. See Oetinger's position on Spirit and Nature, as summarized by Robert Schneider: nature "is . . . only the threshold for spirit, it is the signature, the cipher for the spirit of man and for divine transcendence" (Robert Schneider, Schellings und Hegels schwäbische Geistesansichten ([Würzburg-Aumühle: Konrad Triltsch Verlag, 1938], 91.)

9. The difference between Hegel and Aristotle, however, is that the Unmoved Mover, which is perfectly independent and self-sufficient, is no "system" in the sense of a unity of parts, because it has no parts. Aristotle regards organic being as the most perfect form of being in nature, because of the integrity of the organism's parts. Therefore, it could be said that Hegel transplants Aristotle's criterion for "natural substance" into the "heavens", and conceives the Unmoved Mover (Absolute Idea) on the model of organic being. This should not be surprising, for Hegel would

Of course, it is impossible to understand the aims, language, as well as hermetic subtext of the Hegelian Philosophy of Nature without looking to Schelling. As I discussed in Chapter Two, Schelling's early "philosophy of nature" chronicles how Reason, the Absolute Ego, unconsciously produces a tangible world which reaches its consummation with the emergence of man, who can embody self-conscious Reason or Ego. This is held to be parallel to "transcendental idealism," Reason's actual self-understanding, because in both it is Reason or Ego that is the underlying principle and "result." Thus, the distinctions between subject and object, and between matter and consciousness, are transcended: nature, the external world or object, is really Ego expressing or developing itself.

Unlike Hegel's Absolute, however, Schelling's Absolute does not comprehend the "moments" of Philosophy of Nature and Transcendental Philosophy. Instead, the Absolute for Schelling is a transcendent identity point beyond all duality. In the Differenzschrift, Hegel expounds Schelling's Identity Philosophy and refers to the "identity point" as the "indifference point" and "point of contraction."¹⁰ In the "system of the subject"

regard Aristotle's transcendent Unmoved Mover as an unrealized abstraction.

10. G.W.F. Hegel, Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy, trans. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 165-67. German edition: Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 4

(transcendental idealism), the Ego is "contracted" into its primordial self-relation. In the system of the object, or nature, Ego "expands" outward as a real but "frozen" expression of itself to itself.¹¹ Schelling even went so far as to interpret laws of nature as laws of Spirit in "unconscious form." His "Identity philosophy" held out the hope of an experience of the ultimate unity of subject and object, and finite and infinite, in aesthetic consciousness. As I noted in Chapter Two, Schelling was strongly influenced by Spinoza. In his "Exposition of My System of Philosophy" (1801) Schelling made the claim that the Absolute Ego of Fichte was identical with Spinoza's "God of Nature." Schelling linked the two parallel parts of his system, transcendental idealism and philosophy of nature, to Spinoza's twin divine attributes of thought and extension. He even referred to Naturphilosophie as the "Spinozism of physics."¹²

As to the details of Schellingian Naturphilosophie, Schelling held that such basic scientific concepts as light, gravity, electricity and so on, could only be understood through philosophy, not through the empirical

(henceforth, Differenz), ed. Hartmut Buchner and Otto Pöggler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), 71-73.

11. F.W.J. Schelling, Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie, in Werke, Vol. 2 (Munich: Beck, 1927), 268.

12. "Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie," in Werke, Vol. 2, 273.

method of science.¹³ His Naturphilosophie is basically conceived as a series of energy or "life" levels. For Schelling, the individual objects in nature are products of the restraint of nature's infinite life.¹⁴ It is worth quoting a passage from his lecture course on the Philosophy of Art (1802-3) at length:

There is One philosophy only and only One science of philosophy; the so-called philosophical sciences are merely expositions of the One, simple whole of philosophy in diverse Potenzen or under distinct ideal determinations. . . . There is truly in itself only One essential being, One absolute reality . . . ; since the one being is indivisible, multiplicity is only possible in so far as it is posited as the undivided whole in distinct determinations. These determinations I term Potenzen. . . . But philosophy in its complete appearance emerges only in the totality of all Potenzen. For it ought to be a true picture [Bild] of the universe--and this is the same thing as the Absolute expressed in the totality of all

13. In Chapter Two I mentioned Robert Schneider's claim that Schelling's use of such terms as Licht, Finsternis, Abgrund, Band der Kräfte, auf löslich, unauf löslich, bestandhaltend, lebendige Bewegungskräfte shows the impress of Oetinger's thought. R. Schneider, 10.

14. Dietrich von Engelhardt, "Natural Science in the Age of Romanticism" in Modern Esoteric Spirituality, ed. Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 103.

ideal determinations. God and the Universe are one, they are only different aspects of one and the same being. God is the universe considered from the side of Identity . . . In the Absolute itself, and thus also in the principle of philosophy, there is no Potenz precisely because it contains all Potenzen . . . I call this principle the absolute identity point of philosophy precisely for this reason, that it is not equal to any specific Potenz, and yet it comprehends all of them.¹⁵

As to these Potenzen, they are conceived by Schelling as having three levels, each being a different representation of the infinite in the finite. The differences between the levels can also be understood at one and the same time as differences in the relation of subject to object. The first Potenz involves the "production" of primal matter out of the three forces of repulsion, attraction, and gravity. With respect to the structure of primal matter, Schelling overcomes the opposed concepts of atomism and dynamism with his own "dynamic atomism."¹⁶ In the second Potenz, the qualitative aspects of inorganic matter are understood in terms of the concepts of magnetism, electricity, and chemistry. The third Potenz deals with the world of organic being.

15. Schelling, Werke, Vol. 5, 365-67.

16. Engelhardt, 103.

Schelling's philosophy of the organism, of the third Potenz, understands life as the relationship of matter and the ideal--the ideal conceived in its initial "exteriorization" as light. This relationship can take three forms. First, light or the ideal can "shine" in matter, in which case the principle of reality predominates. Second, matter can "break up" into light, in which case the ideal principle is dominant. Third, there can be an absolute identity between life and the ideal. These three "forms" taken by life are represented in specific organisms by the qualities of sensitivity, irritability and reproduction, which are the three categories which principally characterize the third Potenz.¹⁷ As H.S. Harris points out, Schelling's Identity Philosophy is clearly a latter-day version of the "great chain of being," for he treats the "higher" organic being as "presupposed" by the "lower" inorganic being, and the inorganic as progressively moving toward the actualization of the organic.¹⁸ He then goes on to depict nature moving through a scale of organic being, toward its highest form, man.¹⁹

17. See Schelling, Fernere Darstellungen (1802), Werke, Vol. 4, 213-223.

18. This is also Oetinger's conception. Robert Schneider remarks that "All the tension of the opposing powers of being is for Oetinger only the prelude to the unfolding of organic life." R. Schneider, 113. My translation.

19. Harris, Introduction to Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy, 43.

Many of the practitioners of Naturphilosophie, including the Schellingians, were responsible for significant discoveries in the sciences, which were sometimes accepted by their contemporaries, and sometimes came to be accepted later.²⁰ For instance, the physicist J.W. Ritter reacted to Herschel's discovery of invisible infrared rays by insisting that the "polarity" of nature demanded a complement to infrared. Walter Wetzels writes of Ritter that "the question was never whether it could be found, but only how to detect these new, invisible rays beyond violet which the doctrine of polarity simply demanded . . . Ritter proved on 22 February 1801 the existence of ultraviolet rays. Clearly [Schelling's] philosophical concept of polarity had preceded and guided his experiment."²¹ Schelling himself was honored by the medical faculty of the University of Landshut for his contributions to medical theory. In 1808, he became an honorary member of the Erlangen "Physicalisch-medicinischen Societät." Significant followers of Schelling among scientists included the astronomer J.E. von Berger, the

20. Engelhardt, 123.

21. Walter Wetzels, Johann Wilhelm Ritter: Physik im Wirkungsfeld der deutschen Romantik (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1973), 32-33. Quoted in Dale Snow, Schelling and the End of Idealism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 113. Andrew Weeks writes that Ritter "was a figure half out of the esoteric tradition, a Grübler deeply immersed in Böhme and Paracelsus, yet also at the threshold of the modern understanding of electricity" (Andrew Weeks, German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993], 221).

minerologist F.B. von Baader, the botanists H.F. Link and C.G. Nees, and the physicians K.G. Carus, K.A. Eschenmayer, and K.J.H. Windischmann (whose work was discussed in Chapter Three). Because Hegel's own Philosophy of Nature in its complete form, with the explicative remarks from his lectures, was not published until after his death, Hegel exercised considerably less influence on scientists than did Schelling.

Perhaps the most important of Schelling's followers was Henrik Steffens (1773-1845), a Dane who studied minerology, botany and zoology at Copenhagen University. In 1797 he received his doctorate in minerology at Kiel. Traveling in Germany on a Danish scholarship, he heard Fichte and Schelling lecture at Jena, and contributed to Schelling's Journal. He also came to know Goethe, Novalis and A. G. Schlegel. In 1804 he was appointed professor of minerology, physiology and natural history at Halle, then in 1811 at Breslau he became professor of physics, and finally reached the apex of his career with an appointment in Berlin in 1832. Steffens published a textbook on Naturphilosophie, the basis for his lectures at Halle, in 1806, which was quite influential.²² Though Hegel read Steffens and undoubtedly learned something from him, his opinion of Steffens was largely negative, as it was toward most of Schelling's followers: "Most of his [Steffens's]

22. For more on Steffens see Petry, Hegel's Philosophy of Nature, Vol. 2, 253-55.

views are the crude and undisciplined utterances of a wild and hazy imagination" (PN § 340; Petry III, 26).

It is generally conceded that Hegel's grasp of science was superior to Schelling's and that his Philosophy of Nature was much less fanciful and more solidly grounded than Schelling's scientific works. Hegel was critical of the Schellingians' propensity to speak in terms of "correspondences" (an "error" which, as I will discuss later, Hegel committed with abandon!). In the Preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit, Hegel writes that "Formalism in the Philosophy of Nature takes the form of teaching that understanding is electricity, animals are nitrogen, or equivalent to the South or North pole, and so on" (Miller, 30; PG, 37). As an example of what Hegel is talking about, J. von Görres wrote in 1803 that "what is reason in our personality is the sun in nature outside; what is idea there is light here; the sun thinks in light, reason shines in the idea, and shines and sparkles around itself."²³ In an 1814 letter to Paulus, Hegel states that "You know that I have occupied myself too much not only with ancient literature but also with mathematics and recently with higher analysis, differential calculus, physics, natural history, [and] chemistry to be affected by that humbug in natural philosophy which consists in philosophizing without knowledge by the power of imagination, and in regarding

23. Quoted in Englehardt, 109.

empty brainstorm born of conceit as thoughts."²⁴ By 1815 enthusiasm for Naturphilosophie had begun to wane. Perhaps the major reason for this was the excesses of the Schellingian school. The low repute in which Hegel's Philosophy of Nature is held is due almost entirely to the confusion of its content with the content of Schelling's writings on the same subject--an ignorant error made even by contemporaries of the two men. Petry writes that "it is only in its superficial features that the 'Philosophy of Nature' resembles the corresponding Schellingian writings."²⁵

Nevertheless--and no matter how much Hegel sought to distinguish himself from the Schellingian school--it is clear that Hegel is moving in the same Begriffswelt as Schelling. I will shortly discuss some of the conceptual overlap between the two Philosophies of Nature, and its common source in the alchemical and theosophical speculations of Böhme, Oetinger, and still older authors. One point that bears mentioning right away, however, is Schelling's and Hegel's shared opposition to Newtonian science. They regarded the Newtonian picture of the universe as a depiction of a dead, mechanical system of externally-related entities. Instead, they saw the world as a cosmos: an internally-related organic whole.²⁶ In his

24. Butler, 309; Hoffmeister #235.

25. Petry, Hegel's Philosophy of Nature, Vol. 1, 79.

26. H.S. Harris, Introduction to G.W.F. Hegel, System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit, trans. H.S.

later Philosophy of Nature, Hegel speaks of the "whole organism of the Earth" and writes that "The entire condition of the atmosphere, including the trade-winds is . . . a vast, living whole" (PN § 288, Z; Petry II, 51-52). In essence, the Newtonian model represents for both Schelling and Hegel the physics of the Understanding, of the thinking which thinks that even organic nature can be understood in terms of mechanism. Both Schelling and Hegel hold that Newton misapplies his mechanical model to such subjects as light, color, and gravity, which--so they hold--cannot be understood mechanically. Both men make a place for mechanism in their Philosophies of Nature; a delimited "realm," so to speak, in which the principles of Newtonian mechanics are valid. Mechanics cannot, however, explain what Hegel calls Physics (Physik) or Organics (Organische Physik). Schelling and Hegel both champion the science of Kepler, their fellow Swabian, as superior to that of Newton.

As early as 1801 Hegel began making notes toward developing his own Philosophy of Nature. He continually revised these notes--many of which still survive--during his time in Jena. He lectured on the subject eight times: in Jena in 1805-06, in Heidelberg in Summer 1818, and in Berlin in 1819-20, 1821-22, 1823-24, 1825-26, 1828, and 1830. His only published account of his Philosophy of

Nature was the second division of the Encyclopedia. This material was published in two other revised editions (1827 and 1830, the latter edition containing some 3600 alterations). In 1847, Karl Ludwig Michelet published an edition of the Philosophy of Nature with additions

(Zusätze) compiled from Hegel's manuscripts and lecture notes, chiefly from the periods 1805-06 and 1819-30.

(Michelet did not have access to the manuscripts from the period 1801-04.) As to the Philosophy of Subjective

Spirit, Ludwig Boumann published an edition incorporating the lecture Zusätze in 1845. Boumann had a number of

manuscript sources at his disposal, including not only Hegel's but also the notes of several of his students. T

he material in Hegel's Philosophies of Nature and

Subjective Spirit is so unfamiliar to most readers that

some account of the content of these texts is necessary,

especially if my arguments about Hermetic influences are to be intelligible. Because this material is highly complex,

however, my account will necessarily be limited to the high

points and major transitions of the texts. I do not intend

to go into all of the complexities of the development of

Hegel's Philosophy of Nature and Subjective Spirit, and all

the differences between the various editions and

manuscripts. In the account which follows I will be

relying on the editions assembled by Michelet and Boumann.

I will not go into detail regarding the material from 1801

to 1804. Hegel did change his mind about some things, but the spirit of his enterprise remains the same throughout, and sometimes what has been taken by interpreters as a change of mind should be understood more as a change of focus. Hegel's treatment of Aether is a case in point. Thus, although I will be basing my account mainly on Hegel's "mature" treatment of these Sciences, I will be drawing freely from earlier material.

2. Nature and Subjective Spirit

(a) *Nature: Prefatory Remarks*

As I discussed in the last chapter, at the end of the Logic the Idea "freely releases" itself as nature. This is similar to Schelling's own position. During his Jena association with Schelling, Hegel wrote that, "Nature is the other-being of the Idea, which gets superceded in the spirit and by the spirit through its freedom as that which thinks the Idea in its ideality as spirit's own self. Now this negativity has been represented both by the Gnostics and by Schelling as a going-forth of the Idea from itself or as a falling of the Idea away from itself."²⁷ In the Philosophy of Nature, in a paragraph written possibly twelve to fifteen years later, Hegel states that, "Nature

27. "The Report of Rosenkranz About Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit in the Early Jena Period," in Harris and Knox, 262 (Hegel quoted). See Karl Rosenkranz, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), 188.

has yielded itself as the Idea in the form of otherness" (PN § 247; Petry I, 205).²⁸

Hegel's claim that Nature must be understood as an "expression" of the Idea is often dismissed as arbitrary and fanciful. It is neither of these, however. What Hegel means is simply that in order to understand nature we require the concept of Concept. In his Introduction to the Philosophy of Nature, Hegel alludes to the blurry distinctions between classes and species in nature, and the proliferation of monstrosities or deformities in all species. Nature is seldom neat and tidy. Hegel points out, however, that "In order to classify such formations as defective, imperfect, or deformed, an invariable prototype has to be assumed. This prototype cannot be drawn from experience, because it is experience which presents us with these monstrosities, deformities, intermediate types, etc. Rather one must presuppose the independence and worth of Conceptual Determination" (PN § 250; Petry I, 216). Here Hegel sounds rather Kantian, claiming, it seems, that the determinations of the Concept are what we always "bring to" our understanding of nature. The difference, however, is that for Hegel the Concept and its moments are not "subjective." As we saw in the last chapter, Hegel's Logic

28. See one of the Zusätze from the Berlin period, 1819-1830: "The divine Idea is just this self-release, the expulsion of this other out of itself, and the acceptance of it again, in order to constitute subjectivity and spirit" (PN § 247, Z; Petry I, 205).

is a "realm" of eternal form, not a psychology or phenomenology. Whatever one may think of Hegel's claims about the ontological status of the Concept, his claims about the relationship of Concept to Nature are quite sound: only our presupposition of the Logic/Ontological categories of universal, particular, individual, and the rest, can explain our experience of nature's products as imperfect, partial, fuzzy, or monstrous. In the 1831 Preface to the second edition of the Science of Logic Hegel writes, "If nature as such, as the physical world, is contrasted with the natural sphere, then logic must certainly be said to be the supernatural [Übernatürliche], which permeates every relationship of man to nature, his sensation, intuition, desire, need, instinct, and simply by doing so transforms it into something human, even though only formally human, into ideas and purposes" (Miller, 32; WL I, 10; my emphasis).

Idea is reflected in Nature; it is an other to Idea. This relationship between Nature and Idea is recapitulated throughout the Philosophy of Nature: all relations in Nature are external relations. Things "endeavour" to stand apart from others as independent. Everything is an approximation to or imperfect "imitation" of the one truly independent existent object, Idea realized in Spirit. Hegel has collapsed Aristotle's two-tiered scale of being into one tier. Whereas Aristotle held that man is the

highest terrestrial being, but that man and his world are only a part of what "strives" to imitate the Unmoved Mover, Hegel has actualized the Unmoved Mover (Absolute Idea) in man himself. In Hegel, all beings "strive" not to imitate a transcendent Unmoved Mover, but to be "absorbed" into the nous (Vernunft) of that Active Intellect which is Spirit; it is their "natural end."

Despite his use of creation imagery and Neoplatonic emanation language, Hegel says that he does not believe that the universe was created in time. He writes that "The world is created, is now being created, and has always been created; this becomes apparent in the conservation of the world" (PN § 247, Z; Petry I, 207). In other words, the world and all its states and processes--the coming into being of new individuals, the maintenance of individuals over time, etc.--is a perpetual imitation or expression of the eternal Idea. It is important to emphasize that what is eternal is the Idea, not Spirit. Hegel believes that life and consciousness have not been around for eternity. They arose at a certain point in time, as did Spirit, the human form of life and consciousness, which actualizes itself in history (the theme of the Phenomenology and Lectures on the Philosophy of World History). Hegel's Philosophy of Nature presents us with a system of stages, but except for the coming into being of organic nature, they should not be conceived as temporal stages. Hegel

writes, "This is not to be thought of as a natural engendering of one [stage] out of the other . . . but as an engendering within the inner Idea which constitutes the ground of nature" (PN § 249; Petry I, 212). Furthermore, as is well known Hegel rejects evolution.

The Philosophy of Nature consists of three main stages or moments. Mechanics (Die Mechanik) treats inert matter which is acted on and caused to move by external forces. Physics (Die Physik) deals with the intrinsic nature of corporeality as such, its elements, powers, etc. In Organics (Organische Physik) we find matter forming itself into systems which aim at being self-sustaining and complete; reflections of the Absolute Idea. It is easy to see how this final division corresponds to the "Doctrine of the Concept" in the Logic. Physics corresponds to Essence in so far as in Physics we "look within" matter to see its "essence." As I will show, what we see when we look there is Organicism foreshadowed, just as we see the Absolute Idea foreshadowed as the "essence" of things. How Mechanics relates to Being is a little more difficult to see, but the following account will help clarify things.

(b) Nature: Mechanics

The first category of Mechanics is Space (Der Raum). Space is the idea of externality as such. That this should be the first category of the Philosophy of Nature is hardly

surprising. The Idea, or eternal form, transcends space and time. As an "other" to Idea what must chiefly characterize Nature is the very notion of one thing being external or physically opposed to another. Space is analogous to Pure Being because we understand perfectly what both mean, yet they are ineffable. It is perfectly sensible to talk about the Being of things, even though on examination it turns out to be a completely empty category. Similarly, we understand perfectly what it means for one thing to be external to another or to be extended, yet this concept is so primitive to our understanding of the physical world that it is impossible to define or to explain in a non-circular manner. The physical, spatial realm is a fully autonomous dimension of reality which cannot be "deduced" from the categories of the Logic (as I explained in the last chapter). It is an irreducible foundation. We see in it, as I have said, only a "reflection" of Idea.

Hegel characterizes Space as "pure quantity, no longer in its merely logical determination, but as an immediate and external being" (PN § 254; Petry I, 224). In other words, space is actual or existent quantity, only the idea of which was given in the Logic. We can easily see the sense of this if we reflect on the fact that we first encounter quantity in our interactions with mutually external beings, such as the beans or blocks that the child

counts in its "construction"---to use Piaget's term--of the category of quantity. Hegel goes on to develop the nature of spatial externality in terms of the point, the line, and the plane (PN § 256; Petry I, 226). As one might expect, he regards the third form, the plane, as "containing" the others. The point and line only have reality as parts or members of a plane. (It is essential to keep in mind that this is not a temporal account. Hegel does not believe that first space came into being, then a single point, then a line, etc.)

Hegel characterizes Space as "positive externality" and Time (Die Zeit) as "negative externality" (PN § 253; Petry I, 221). In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, he refers to "space-time" as "the externality in which objects are side-by-side, mutually external, and successive" (LPR III, 280; VPR III, 205). Hegel speaks of Time as the "truth" of Space. This is because he regards Time as the "self-transcendence" of Space, of Space overcoming its own spatiality. In the whole of the Philosophy of Nature, this must be one Hegel's most obscure claims. Space "breaks up" into distinct points, lines, and planes, which constitute distinct parts of space. This division of Space is accomplished through things which possess these three dimensions. Without things to be external to one another, externality, and thus spatiality, make no sense. Thus, Space is made up of "pockets" of

externality or existent things. The negation of Space consists in a change in the position of these mutually-external things: thing A at point 1, moves into point 2 and thereby, in the absence of A, point 1 "vanishes" as a determinate Space. This negation Hegel calls Time. Again, Hegel is drawing on Aristotle: "time is the measure of motion with respect to 'before' and 'after'" (Physics, 219b).

Hegel writes that Time is not a container in which things exist, instead it is the idea or abstraction of their negation or overcoming or motion in Space: "Time itself is this becoming, arising, and passing away, it is the abstraction which has being, the Kronos which engenders all and destroys that to which it gives birth" (PN § 258; Petry I, 230). We can now understand more fully Hegel's statement in the Phenomenology that "Time is the Concept itself that is there" (Die Zeit ist der Begriff selbst, der da ist; Miller, 487). Time is an existent abstraction or idea. We do not encounter it just in thought; we encounter it all the time in experience. It is not a "real thing," yet strangely it is. Hegel calls Time the Concept because Time is the expression in the spatial world, or Nature, of the determinate negation we find in the Concept's dialectical self-specification. Things are overcome in Time because they are finite, and this negation of finitude points to the infinite and the eternal. Time itself, this

"Kronos," is infinite and eternal. Hence, Time is the existent Concept.

There is thus a close correspondence between Being-Nothing-Becoming in the Logic and Space, Time and what Hegel calls "Place and Motion" (Der Ort und die Bewegung) in Mechanics. Space and Time are both "empty" (Time, of course, being empty not as a container but as an existent abstraction) as were Being and Nothing. Yet in their identity--in the identity of Space and its negation--we find a positive third term: Motion (from Place A to B) which is concrete or actual Becoming. (In Mechanics, Hegel therefore preserves the Greek understanding of all change as motion.) Of course, what all of these Mechanical concepts presuppose, as I hinted above, is the concept of Matter (Materie). Without material objects there is no Space (no "externality"), and no Motion through Space in Time.

In the Phenomenology Hegel writes that "Matter . . . is not an existent thing, but is being in the form of a universal, or in the form of the Concept" (Miller, 292; PG, 144). This means that "matter" is not a thing that exists; it is not a distinct entity or a substance out of which things are made. It is "universal being" in the sphere of Nature because in that sphere what is real is "material." "Matter" is just another way of talking about extension and spatial separation. Hegel states this outright: "Matter is

spatial separation" (PN 262, Z; Petry I, 243). The substantiality of Matter consists specifically in its weight: "the primary essence of Matter is that it has weight. This is not an external property which may be separated from it. Gravity constitutes the substantiality of Matter, which itself consists of a tendency towards a center which falls outside it" (PN § 262; Petry I, 242). What Hegel is alluding to in the last sentence is the material object's reference beyond itself, to another, more powerful body. This is a mechanical reflection of the relationship of the Concept to its moments, and a prefiguration of the system of organic being and the nature of its parts.

Hegel writes that "If Matter reached what it aspires to in gravity, it would fuse together into a single point" (PN § 262, Z; Petry I, 243). Gravity negates the mutual externality of material objects. Hegel sees the essence of Matter in its tendency to collect together to form primitive systems. Hegel also refers to gravity as Attraction (Attraktion), and opposes it to Repulsion (Repulsion). Repulsion is the force which works against Matter's tendency toward homogeneity, and maintains a universe of separate material beings. Without this frustration of attraction, Matter really would fuse together and organic being would never arise, and thus consciousness and Spirit would never arise. Once again,

negativity plays a role in the actualization of the Idea's higher purposes.

(c) Nature: Physics

With Physics we penetrate into matter itself, and discover that the individual material body must be understood as containing within itself an order and structure as complex as that of the solar system. In the "Physics of Universal [allgemeinen] Individuality," Hegel discusses the four elements of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. Before this, however, he discusses another quaternity, the nature of the solar, planetary, lunar, and cometary bodies. Along the way there occurs a highly significant discussion of Light. Hegel's treatment of the heavenly bodies is quite interesting and often fanciful. At one point Hegel states that "The Moon is the waterless crystal, which attempts to quench the thirst of its rigidity by integrating itself with our sea, thereby causing the ebb and flow of the tides. The waters rise, having a mind to escape to the Moon, and the Moon is about to clasp them unto itself" (PN § 279; Petry II, 28). As for the four elements, I will deal with them extensively in section four.

Hegel describes Light as the "universal self" of Matter (PN § 275; Petry II, 12). Early in the Philosophy of Spirit, Hegel refers to Light as "physicalized space"

(PS § 401; Petry II, 169). Light is, as it were, a kind of infinite filling or propagation in space. In the case of material bodies (and Hegel does not believe Light to be composed of material bodies) Space is only actualized in terms of a number of finite points. The "filling" of Space by Light, however, is infinite and thus in itself infinitely actualizes spatial extension. Hegel writes that "Light is infinite spatial extension, or rather the infinite generation of Space" (PN § 275, Z; Petry II, 14). At the same time Light is pure manifestation (*ibid.*). Light is the "universal self" of Matter because in Light everything reveals itself.²⁹

Light connects everything, and thus functions as a kind of overcoming of the force of Repulsion, without, of course, actually affecting the position of bodies. Hegel's treatment of Light is similar to his understanding of Time: it is a kind of existent ideality; it is in the world, yet no-thing. Hegel writes that "Light is incorporeal, it is in fact immaterial matter; although this appears to be a contradiction, it is an appearance which cannot depend upon us" (PN § 276; Petry II, 19). Because light, as pure manifestation, unifies all things without physically affecting them, it is an imperfect, spatialized reflection

29. Robert Schneider has argued that Hegel's, as well as Schelling's, use of Licht was influenced by Oetinger. Oetinger refers to Licht as the "tincture," a common alchemical term, and holds that it represents an active power "underlying" all things. See Schneider, 91-92, 97-98, 119.

of the Idea, which is the pure, eidetic system of All in All. Light is also a prefiguration of philosophical thought, which, grasping the Idea, sees everything as parts in whole, but without physically affecting anything. Hegel writes that "There is an attitude of mind which is said to be 'realistic,' and which denies that ideality is present in nature; it should be asked to concern itself among other things with Light, which is pure manifestation, and nothing but manifestation" (PN § 276; Petry II, 17).

Recall that in the last chapter I mentioned that Hegel states that the indeterminateness at the beginning of his Logic could be called space, pure thought, or being. I argued that this indeterminateness is equivalent to what Hegel calls Aether, in his earlier Philosophy of Nature. Recall also that Hegel relates this space-thought-being to Indian philosophy, stating that it is "altogether the same as what the Indian calls Brahma, when for years on end, physically motionless and equally unmoved in sensation, conception, fantasy, desire and so on, looking only at the tip of his nose, he says inwardly only Om, Om, Om, or else nothing at all. This dull, empty consciousness, understood as consciousness, is--being" (Miller, 97; WL, 89). As I have already pointed out, "Om" (or "Aum") is conceived in Indian thought as the energy of the universe, an ultimate, groundless, eternal vibration from which all things come. (On my account, this is exactly what Hegel means by

Aether.) In the Philosophy of Nature, Indian thought--and, implicitly, the meditation on "Om"--shows up again in another highly interesting and speculative context. Hegel writes that "If the ego were able to maintain itself in a state of undisturbed equability, as the Indians would like to do, it would pass away into the abstract transparency of light" (PN § 275, Z; Petry II, 13).

It is difficult to know what to make of this bizarre claim. It is tempting, however, to link it with the remarks in the Science of Logic on indeterminacy and the equivalency of space, pure thought, and being. As we have seen, light is physicalized space. Hegel's treatment of light is remarkably like his early treatment of Aether: it is a kind of immaterial matter, an existent ideality. There seems to be an unusual commonality between certain concepts in the Hegelian system, such as Pure Being, Pure Thought, Pure Space, Pure manifestation (Light; also, physicalized or existent Space), Pure annihilation of finitude (Time), and Absolute matter. They are "existent idealities," purely formal beings that nevertheless exist in the world. In his early Philosophy of Nature, Hegel links them all by treating them as manifestations of the primordial Aether. As I will discuss later, he comes to drop this term. It is important to note, however, that the substance of the Aether doctrine--the nature and equivalency of the above terms--remains.

In the "Physics of Particular [besondere] Individuality," Hegel deals with the characteristics of individual material objects through which their own individuality is determined. Hegel treats Specific Gravity as a kind of immature, egoistic will to be "different" in the face of the homogeneous phenomenon of gravity. This is will toward "individualism" in its most primitive form. In Cohesion, Matter attempts to secure its individuality and separation from all else by literally sticking together. This implies, however, that Matter is made of parts which can come loose. On the Aristotelian model of substance--which, as I have shown, Hegel takes over--a true individual is characterized by having either inseparable parts, or preferably no distinction at all between its form and its parts (or matter). The direction Hegel is moving in here is to show that matter possesses a fatal flaw which will always frustrate its "drive" to be individual, to stand apart.

Hegel refers to Sound as "the ideality of materiality" (PN § 300; Petry II, 69). The sound an object makes is its expression: it is a kind of statement released by the thing which belongs to it, which may even characterize it, but which stands as other to the thing, an immaterial form emitted from a material body. Sound, Hegel says, is "the plaint of ideal nature in the midst of violence" (PN § 300, Z; Petry II, 72), referring to the fact that objects often

only emit sounds when struck. Sound may, as I have said, "belong" to the thing, but it is a negation of its materiality, and an "opening," as it were, in the tight bundle into which Matter seeks to wad itself in pursuit of individuality. With Heat, we have the negation of Cohesion: when hot, objects loosen up and become more fluid. The telos of this whole development, if it can be called that, is toward the overcoming of Matter's futile attempt to stand on its own. What we look toward now is the role Matter must accept as second best: becoming part of some higher physical reality which is better able to approach to true individuality.

In the "Physics of Total [totalen] Individuality" Hegel deals with forces or processes which can, in differing ways, serve to involve separate material bodies in totalities greater than themselves. Magnetism is the first such phenomenon treated by Hegel. J.N. Findlay writes that, "Hegel refuses to look on Magnetism as mysterious: it involves none of the invisible currents beloved by the Understanding. It is a mere assertion of the unity of the Notion [i.e., Concept] over the surface separateness of Matter."³⁰ Hegel sees the forces of magnetism expressed statically in the many facets of the Crystal. H.S. Harris writes that "in the self-shaping of crystals, he saw an anticipatory hint of the self-

30. See Findlay, Hegel: A Re-Examination (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 281.

generation and self-maintenance of the organism."³¹ In inorganic nature, material bodies may form into systems, but they preserve their character of separability and quasi-individuality. Just as magnetism pulls bodies together and acts on them so as to produce various kinds of phenomena, so this attracting force is answered by a repulsing force: Electricity. Hegel thinks that Electricity is the lashing out of bodies against each other. (Needless to say, such language is intended by me, and by Hegel, as figurative.) One can see this in the phenomenon of friction, which requires one body to strike another. Hegel sees Electricity as the individualized light of a body (PN § 323; Petry II, 165).

According to Hegel, Chemical Process is the "unity of magnetism and electricity" (PN § 326; Petry II, 179). Just how this is the case is too complex to do justice to here. Suffice it to say that Chemical Process is capable of effecting the highest type of fusion or totality which we have encountered so far. In Chemical Process, different matters interact with one another in such a way that their fundamental natures change. They can even become the ingredients in the production of an entirely new being. In this latter case, the individuality of the ingredients is thoroughly obliterated. Hegel's discussion of Chemical Process covers alloys, galvanism, combustion, formation of

31. Harris, Night Thoughts, 100.

salts, and chemical affinity. The intrinsic flaw in Chemical Process, however, is that it is effected only through the intervention of an external agent.

(d) Nature: Organics

So far Hegel's reflections have shown how the processes of Mechanism and Physics must be understood in terms of the production of individuality. What we are now looking toward is an individual which is a complex system of parts, and which can effect its own chemical and other processes without the continual intervention of external forces. Obviously, this is a description of a living being. Organic being is the highest form of nature. Hegel writes that "Organic being, which is individuality existing for itself and developing itself into its differences within itself, constitutes totality as found in nature" (PN § 252; Petry I, 219). Organic being "turns itself into what it is. It is a pre-existent end, and is itself merely result" (PN § 352; Petry III, 107). As a genuine whole, the parts of which can have no separate existence, organic being resembles the Concept itself (PN § 337; Petry III, 10).

Hegel divides Organics into treatments of the Terrestrial or Geological (geologische) Organism, the Vegetable Organism, and the Animal Organism. This is, of course, the traditional Scholastic division of mineral,

vegetable, and animal. Hegel, like Schelling, treats the Earth as an organism. As I noted earlier, he speaks of the "whole organism of the Earth" and writes that "The entire condition of the atmosphere, including the trade-winds is . . . a vast, living whole" (PN § 288, Z; Petry II, 51-52). The vegetation that appears on the Earth's surface is a different form of living being altogether, yet it is one which stays attached to the Earth, feeding off of its life and energy. It is this very attachment to Earth which is the flaw in the Vegetable Organism. The Animal Organism, however, is mobile. It is not attached to or permanently dependent upon some one other being, thus it comes closer to realizing the ideal of true individuality.

Hegel states that "The animal organism is the microcosm, the center of nature which has become for itself. Within it, the whole of inorganic nature has recapitulated itself, and is idealized, and it is this that has to be demonstrated by the more detailed exposition of it" (PN § 352, Z; Petry III, 108). The Animal Organism is a "recapitulation" of all that has gone before in that it has sublated all the preceding moments or levels of nature. I stated earlier that organic being resembles the Concept in that it is a system in which the parts are not pieces or separable components, but merely moments. Animal organism is the highest form of organic being. Hegel states that, "In so far as the animal's members are simply moments of

its form, and are perpetually negating their independence, and withdrawing into a unity which is the reality of the Concept, and is for the Concept, the animal is the existent Idea. If a finger is cut off, a process of chemical decomposition sets in, and it is no longer a finger" (PN § 350, Z; Petry III, 103). Again, the influence of Aristotle is readily apparent.³² Hegel states earlier that "Animal life is . . . the Concept displaying itself in Space and Time" (PN § 337, Z; Petry III, 13).

In Chapter Four, I mentioned that "Desire," the dark egoistic will to cancel the other which appears in The Phenomenology of Spirit, is prefigured in animal nature. The difference between man and nature is that man can "master" nature and "absorb" it without literally annihilating it. In his early Philosophy of Nature of 1805-6, Hegel writes: "eating and drinking make inorganic things into what they are in themselves, in truth, it is the unconscious comprehending of them--they become thus sublated thereby, because they are in themselves [this fire essence]."³³ Eating and drinking annihilate sensible things and reduce them to their elements, to what they are "in-themselves." It is in animal sex and nutrition that

32. "A hand is not a part of man when it is in just any state, but only when it can fulfill its function, and therefore only when it is alive; if it is not alive it is not a part" (Metaphysics, 1036b; my translation).

33. Quoted in Harris, Night Thoughts, 448. Harris (Ibid.) writes that animal nutrition is "the self-intro-reflection of the inorganic."

Hegel sees human Science prefigured. Hegel sees eating as the most primitive form in which conscious being seeks to make the object its own, or to collapse the distinction between subject and object. Hegel writes that "Assimilation itself is the enveloping of the externality within the unity of the subject" (PN § 363; Petry III, 151). As was demonstrated in the Phenomenology, attempting to physically absorb or master the object is not efficacious. The "otherness" of things can only be overcome in thought. In the Philosophy of Nature Hegel treats excretion as an acknowledgement of this "error" on the part of the animal: "the significance of the excrements is merely that through them the organism acknowledges its error, and rids itself of its entanglement with external things" (PN § 365, Z; Petry III, 164).

Thus the organism's conflict with the other cannot be resolved through nutrition. In reproduction, on the other hand, the animal confronts an other which is like itself (notice the analogy to Self-Consciousness and its treatment of "recognition" in the Phenomenology). The animal recognizes itself in its mate, and in the sex act the individuality of both is momentarily annihilated and they are submerged into the unity of their genus. Because the animal is neither thoughtful nor thoughtfully self-aware, it cannot make the genus its object, it can only momentarily become one with it in an unconscious manner.

Nevertheless, in reproduction the animal comes the closest it can to what in man becomes Speculative Science. The animal cannot truly rise above its individuality and grasp its concept, or genus, and the Concept itself. Thus, it is simply an expendable, replaceable expression of its genus, one destined to no greater achievement than to produce another of its own kind. We can see why Hegel considers human being or Spirit separately from nature: human nature is fundamentally unnatural in that it breaks this cycle and rises above the natural.

(e) Subjective Spirit: Prefatory Remarks

In the introduction to the Philosophy of Nature, Hegel alludes to Schelling's description of nature as "petrified intelligence" (versteinerte Intelligenz), and states that, "God does not remain petrified and moribund however, the stones cry out and lift themselves up to spirit" (PN § 247; Petry, 206). He is alluding, of course, to the necessity of the transition from Nature to Spirit. In the first section of the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit, Hegel offers a succinct summary of the Philosophy of Nature and its relation to Spirit:

The Philosophy of Nature teaches us how Nature rids itself of its externality by stages: how matter

already refutes the independence of the separate individual, of the Many, by gravity, and how this refutation begun by gravity, and still more by simple, indivisible Light, is completed by animal life, by the sentient creature, since this manifests to the omnipresence of the one soul at every point of its corporeity, and therewith the accomplished triumph over asunderedness. Since, then, everything material is overcome by the action of Spirit implicit in Nature, this triumph being consummated in the substance of soul, the latter emerges as the ideality of everything material, as all immateriality, so that everything called matter, no matter how much it conveys to ordinary thinking the illusory appearance of independence, is known to have no independence relatively to Spirit [PS § 389, Z; Miller, 32-33].

Spirit is both antecedent and consequent of nature. In one of his many Aristotelian moments, Hegel states that "It is precisely because Spirit constitutes the end of nature, that it is antecedent to it" (PN § 376; Petry III, 212). In other words, Spirit is the telos of nature. Spirit presupposes nature, and nature presupposes Spirit. At a certain point, one natural being, man, raises himself out of his natural state and lifts himself to the Idea. Hegel believes that this process is historical, not

evolutionary in the Darwinian sense. Nature did not "produce" Spirit; Spirit is the negation of nature. Hegel writes that "The purpose of nature is to extinguish itself, and to break through its rind of immediate and sensuous being, to consume itself like a Phoenix in order to emerge from this externality rejuvenated as Spirit" (*ibid.*).

In Chapter Four I very briefly discussed the relationship between the Phenomenology of Spirit and the Philosophy of Spirit. Some commentators treat the latter as if it were simply a revision of the former. Petry, for instance, speaks of the Phenomenology as a "sketch" of the Philosophy of Spirit, and writes that "Since the Philosophy of Spirit is simply a more precise and elaborate exposition of the 'Phenomenology of Spirit' of 1807, there is no reason why this early work should not be regarded as a useful introduction to Hegel's system for those who have not yet attempted to master the subject-matter of the Encyclopedia."³⁴ As we have seen, however, the primary function of the Phenomenology is initiatory: it is not an attempt to systematize all available data about Spirit, but an account of Spirit in a number of different forms, showing how each form is merely a stopping point on the way to Absolute Spirit. The reader is intended to work his way

34. Petry, Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1978), Vol. 1, lxvii, 150. Given the notorious difficulty of the Phenomenology, the claim that it could serve as a "useful introduction" to anything is quite incredible!

through each stage, abandoning each as inadequate to achieve his ultimate goal, wisdom.

The first major division of the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit is "Anthropology," the data of which does not appear in the Phenomenology, even though we know that Hegel was working on this material in the Jena period. Hegel does repeat a certain amount of material from the Phenomenology in the Philosophy of Spirit, primarily in a subsection entitled "Phenomenology." This material is presented, however, in the context of Hegel's scientific account of human conscious faculties, and eschews the educative, initiatory function of the 1807 Phenomenology. Thus, the Phenomenology and Philosophy of Spirit, despite certain commonalities, should be seen as separate works, differing not only in content but in intent.

In the last chapter I discussed how Spirit is the concrete realization of the Absolute Idea in the world. Spirit (specifically Absolute Spirit, to be discussed in the following chapter) closes the circle and actualizes God. Spirit, Hegel states, is the being-there (Dasein) of the Concept (PN § 376; Petry III, 211). As I said in the last chapter, Hegel identifies Absolute Idea with self-thinking thought. Absolute Idea will thus be realized in the world through the self-knowledge of man. At the very beginning of the Philosophy of Spirit, Hegel writes: "Know thyself (Erkenne dich Selbst), this absolute commandment,

is not concerned with a mere self-knowledge, with the particular abilities, character, inclinations and foibles of the individual, but in its intrinsic import, as in the historical contexts in which it has been formulated, it is concerned with the truth of mankind, with the truth in and for itself, with the being itself of Spirit" (PS § 377; Petry I, 3). In other words, we are looking here for self-knowledge in the sense of knowledge of our nature, not of our personal ego.

As we have seen, Spirit is characterized by its drive to overcome the subject-object distinction, to eliminate the "otherness" of the other. What Spirit achieves is an experience of a world which is "merely an apprehension of itself" (PS § 377; Petry I, 5). Hegel writes that "the aim of all genuine science is just this, that Spirit shall recognize itself in everything in heaven and on earth. An out-and-out other simply does not exist for Spirit" (ibid.).

Hegel divides the Philosophy of Spirit into Subjective Spirit, Objective Spirit, and Absolute Spirit. The material of Objective Spirit is covered much more thoroughly in Hegel's Philosophy of Right (1821), his last published work. Absolute Spirit contains the familiar divisions of Art, Religion, and Philosophy. Hegel's lectures on Aesthetics, Philosophy of Religion, and the History of Philosophy can be considered as his fullest

elaboration of Absolute Spirit, which is covered only very briefly in the Encyclopedia.³⁵

Subjective Spirit, with which I am exclusively concerned here, is divided into Anthropology, Phenomenology, and Psychology.

(f) Subjective Spirit: Anthropology, Phenomenology, Psychology

In all the divisions of Subjective Spirit, Spirit is unconscious of itself. The experiences we have via the faculties discussed in this section confront us as just as "other" as the external objects given in some of these experiences. Our task is to make the data of Subjective Spirit our own, which means to possess it in thought. Hence we must move in the end to Absolute Spirit and the philosophical standpoint.

Hegel explains that Anthropology deals with Spirit "in itself," with the "Nature Spirit" (Naturgeist; PS § 387; Petry I, 79).³⁶ Hegel refers to this form of Subjective Spirit as Soul (Seele). Anthropology is divided into three subdivisions, which Hegel summarizes as follows:

Initially the Soul is--

35. Hegel's lecture remarks on Absolute Spirit have been added by his various editors to the lectures on Aesthetics, Philosophy of Religion, and History of Philosophy.

36. He also refers to anthropology as the "basis of man" (PS § 387, Z; Petry I, 40).

(a) In its immediate natural determinacy--the Natural Soul, which only is;

(b) [Then] it is Feeling Soul, entering as an individual into relationship with its immediate being, with the determinatenesses of which it is abstractly for itself;

(c) [Finally] it is Actual Soul, having this immediate being formed within it as its corporeality [Leiblichkeit] (PS § 390; Petry I, 21).

If Hegel's account of nature seems calculated to disturb the "hard-headed" man of science, his Philosophy of Spirit seems positively "New Age." Hegel treats Natural Soul as the anima mundi (Weltseele) (PS § 391; Petry II, 25): a universal soul of nature which is divided up into the individual souls of living beings. Hegel refers to the soul as "an immediate, unconscious totality" (PS § 440, Z; Petry III, 81) and as "the sleep of Spirit" (PS § 389; Petry II, 3). Kelly writes that "At its deepest, pre-individual level, the soul is identical with the living unity or immediate concrete universality of the cosmos. As such, it is the World Soul (anima mundi). . . . It is through the soul that each individual participates in the life of the cosmos."³⁷ Hegel's theory of Natural Soul is a

37. Sean Kelly, Individuation and the Absolute: Hegel, Jung and the Path Toward Wholeness (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 39.

direct consequence of his treatment of the Earth as a living organism.

The Natural Soul is, in effect, the Earth Soul, and all psychic activity ultimately has its origin in a kind of efflux of the Earth. Hegel writes that "The Soul is not only immaterial for itself, rather it is the universal immateriality of nature, its simple ideal life" (PS § 389; Petry II, 3). And: "The Soul is the all-pervasive [Allesdurchbringende], and is not simply that which exists in a particular individual" (PS § 406, Z; Petry II, 271). As to the World-Soul's relationship to individual souls, Hegel states that "It is the substance, that is to say the absolute basis of all the particularizing and singularizing of Spirit, so that Spirit has within it all the material of its determination, and it remains the pervading identical ideality of this determination" (PS § 389; Petry II, 3).

We are "in ourselves a world of concrete content with an infinite periphery," Hegel says, "and have within us a multitude of numberless relations and connections, which even if it does not enter into our sensation and representation is always within us . . . On account of its infinite wealth of content, the human soul may therefore be said to be the soul of a world, the individually determined World-Soul [Weltseele]" (PS § 402, Z; Petry II, 211). Hegel writes further that "Just as light disperses into an infinite multitude of stars, so the universal Soul of

nature disperses into an infinite multitude of individual souls, the only difference being that whereas light appears to have a subsistence independent of the stars, it is only in individual souls that the universal Soul of nature attains actuality" (PS § 390, Z; Petry II, 23).

Recall that during his Tübingen association with Schelling and Hölderlin, Hegel was attracted to the Pantheistic-Spinozistic ideal of hen kai pan. His reflections on the World Soul seem to suggest that Hegel never entirely abandoned this ideal. In Anthropology, however, he explicitly rejects Pantheism while at the same time conceding, as one might expect, that it is not a bad place to begin:

Organization and system remain entirely alien to pantheism. Where it appears in the form of presentation it is a tumultuous life, a bacchanalian intuition, for instead of allowing the single shapes of the universe to emerge in order, it is perpetually plunging them back into the universal, veering into the sublime and monstrous. Still this intuition is a natural point of departure for every healthy breast [Brust]. Especially in youth, through a life which ensouls us and all about us, we feel kinship and sympathy for the whole of nature, and we therefore have a sensation of the World-Soul, of the unity of

spirit and nature, of the immateriality of nature. (PS § 389, Z; Petry II, 9)

Hegel believes that the Natural Soul bears within it certain influences from the climate and geography of the area of the world in which it is found.³⁸ Hegel writes that "In its substance, which is the Natural Soul, Spirit lives with the universal planetary life, difference of climates, the change of the seasons, the various times of day, etc. This natural life is only partly realized within it, as certain turbid feelings [trüben Stimmungen]" (PS § 392; Petry II, 26). As a result of this, there are different forms of Soul for different nations and peoples and races. Hegel attempts to characterize in general the caucasian, negroid and mongoloid races, stating that "It is in the caucasian race that Spirit first reaches absolute unity with itself,--It is here that it first enters into complete opposition to naturalness [i.e., rises above the mere natural], apprehends itself in its absolute independence, disengages from the dispersive vacillation between one extreme and the other, achieves self-determination, self-development, and so brings forth world history" (PS § 393, Z; Petry II, 57). Hegel points out,

38. This conception bears some similarity to Oetinger's views on the influence on the human soul of pre-human eras and forms of life. One is reminded also of Jung's "collective unconscious." See Ernst Benz, The Theology of Electricity, trans. Wolfgang Taraba (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1989), 55.

however, that given that all men are implicitly rational they possess equal rights, no matter what level of advancement their race may find itself at (PS § 393, Z; Petry 45-47).

Hegel goes on to discuss national differences, and his remarks are interesting and perceptive, much like those of Kant in his Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View (1798). Hegel discusses in greatest detail the Italians, Spaniards, French, English, and Germans. As is typical with German authors, his harshest remarks are reserved for his fellow countrymen. Hegel, like Kant, accuses the Germans of an extreme formalism, and of an absurd preoccupation with rank and title (PS § 394, Z; Petry II, 81-83). Hegel next has some interesting things to say about character, e.g., "A Person without character will either fail to assume determinateness or shift from one direction to the opposite" (PS § 395, Z; Petry II, 91). He holds that individual character is partly a product of the Natural Soul, and thus temperament may be affected by the climate or position on the earth into which one is born. Hegel also makes some extremely perceptive remarks about the stages of life--childhood, youth, and old age--to which I will return in the following chapter.

The section on Feeling Soul is notable chiefly for its treatment of extra sensory perception and animal magnetism, as well as madness. We know that Hegel lectured on animal

magnetism as early as 1805 in Jena. I will deal with this topic, and with Hegel's treatment of the paranormal in general, in much greater detail in the next section.

Hegel's theory of insanity is similar to his theory of bodily disease in the Philosophy of Nature (PN § 371; Petry III, 193-198): he regards disease as a state in which one part of the organism "separates" itself in some manner from the whole and works against the whole. Similarly, insanity involves some idea or notion becoming "dislodged" from the subject's experience and claiming for itself centrality, as well as immunity from rational evaluation or revision. Such is the nature of obsession or the idée fixe (which Hegel calls fixen Vorstellung). Hegel writes that "derangement consists of an abstraction to which the deranged person holds fast in the face of concrete objective consciousness" (PS § 408, Z; Petry II, 353).

Hegel's account of insanity is full of fascinating and often amusing case studies. His comments on the plight of the insane are eminently sensible and humane. He praises Pinel for his use of what has come to be called the "moral treatment" of insanity. Hegel's views on the causes and treatment of insanity contain nothing like the Freudian theory of the unconscious, repression, and defense mechanisms. Nevertheless, in many other ways his comments are surprisingly modern. In contemporary terms, Hegel's approach to curing insanity would be called cognitive. On

Hegel's view, those who would help the insane must take advantage of whatever modicum of reason they still possess (only complete idiots, Hegel thinks, are beyond hope) and make them question their idées fixe. They must either reintegrate their ideas with the rest of the psyche in a positive way, or be gently led to reject them.

Like C.G. Jung, Hegel views the integration of the psyche as the goal of treatment. (The "integrated Soul" is in fact the highest stage of Soul for Hegel: Actual Soul.) Also like Jung, Hegel's approach is highly eclectic, and opposes the rigid application of the same therapeutic approach to every case. Hegel cites examples of patients whose derangement was entirely physical in origin. He also mentions approvingly certain cases in which patients have been cured through clever tricks played by their doctors. One man was cured of his delusion that he was the Holy Spirit by being placed in the same room with another madman, who proclaimed that it was impossible that he was the Holy Spirit, "Because I am the Holy Spirit!" (PS § 408, Z; Petry II, 385).

Just as Anthropology deals with Soul, Phenomenology deals with "Consciousness" (Bewusstsein). All of the forms of consciousness discussed by Hegel in Anthropology--from extra sensory perception, to madness, to habit--have in common the fact that they involve an absence of ego. The subject sinks into identity with universal nature, or acts

in an unconscious state. Habit involves the automatization of some activity until one can perform it without conscious focus. In Consciousness, ego appears. The level of the Soul becomes, in effect, an "other" for Consciousness. One reflects on one's natural predispositions of temperament or desire as if they were alien--especially when those predispositions are difficult to control. The ego must, of course, sublate this other, take control of it, just as it would any opposing object.

In the Phenomenology section Hegel follows the familiar pattern of Consciousness, Self-consciousness, Reason. What he says there can help clarify the 1807 Phenomenology, as well as illuminate the difference between the two texts. As I argued earlier, the 1807 Phenomenology, contra Petry, should not be regarded as a "rough draft" of the Encyclopedia Phenomenology. From what has been said so far, we can see that the 1807 Phenomenology presupposes the ego. In the 1807 Phenomenology Hegel excludes from consideration subconscious or unconscious processes (the Soul), even though he was well aware of them and of their relevance to a science of Spirit. This is yet another reason to believe that in the 1807 Phenomenology Hegel is consciously narrowing his scope and presenting only the material on Spirit which is needed for his psychopompic purposes.³⁹ I

39. The 1807 Phenomenology naturally excludes the material dealing with the Soul because we do not need to "overcome"

will not go through this section here, because it largely consists in material culled from the 1807 Phenomenology, which I have discussed in Chapter Four.

Psychology, the final major division of Subjective Spirit, deals with much that would be termed "theory of knowledge" today. Hegel's topics include the nature of sensation, attention, intuition, memory, imagination, judgment, logical reasoning, etc. It would be impossible to do justice to this material here. Hegel's remarks have a surprisingly contemporary ring. His account of perception is remarkably similar to the popular twentieth-century view of perception as "theory-laden." Hegel's discussion of attention is strikingly Husserlian. At every step, Hegel is treating subjectivity in all its forms as a progressive effort by the subject to make the object its own, to annul the subject-object distinction. For example, in Recollection the object becomes "mine" because I can call it to mind at will. In Imagination it becomes still more my possession, because I can alter it however I like. Full "possession" of the object, as we already know, comes with the integration of the object into our theoretical account of the Whole. Full understanding means full possession.

Practical Spirit involves a very different way in which we attempt to reshape the object. This time it is

or leave behind the Soul--in virtue of having an ego already I have risen above the Soul.

not through observation or understanding or theory-building, but through concrete practice. The most primitive form this takes is that of feeling: feelings such as agreeableness and disagreeableness tell us how the world "ought" to be. The world, of course, frustrates our feelings and so feelings issue in desires or impulses or yearnings, which are largely unreflective "plans" for going about in the world. Of course, this approach to reality cannot produce ultimate satisfaction. It cannot negate the otherness of the other; reality keeps resisting, and so happiness remains always just out of reach. With Consciousness we passed into the sphere of ego-controlled activity, but it is clear that our passions and drives are not chosen by us. Not only does a world stand opposed to me, but so does much that is mine: my sensations, memories, emotions, drives, impulses, etc. Free Spirit (der freie Geist), the final section of Subjective Spirit, involves the subject understanding all that has preceded as the necessary condition of its development. It does not suddenly become free of its unchosen impulses, but it learns to understand them. Thus, no part of Spirit is alien to itself. Nevertheless, it would be impossible to rise to the level of Absolute Spirit and the philosophical standpoint if our feelings and drives and impulses went unchecked. Only civilized society can force us to sublimate and channel our drives in such a way that,

further along, we may realize our full human potential. We must turn, therefore, to the level of Objective Spirit, which I shall discuss in the following chapter.

3. Hegel on Mesmerism and ESP

Hegel mentions mesmerism as a cure for disease very briefly in the Philosophy of Nature. He states that "it is the finger-tips of the magnetizer [des Magnetiseurs] which fluidize the organism by conducting magnetism throughout the whole of it. Only sick persons can be magnetized, and put to sleep by this external means. Precisely considered, magnetism is the collection of the organism into its implicit entirety" (PN § 373; Petry III, 207). In other words, magnetism can help to "re-integrate" an organism in which one or more of the parts is working against the whole. As I noted earlier, Hegel's treatment of animal magnetism in the Philosophy of Spirit falls under the "Feeling Soul" division of Anthropology. As Petry notes "The treatment of animal magnetism is the most extensive and detailed exposition of any one topic in the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit, and one of the most extensive expositions of the whole Encyclopedia."⁴⁰ It was obviously a topic of great importance for Hegel. Before dealing in detail with Hegel's discussion of animal magnetism--as well as other paranormal phenomena--I shall first briefly

40. Petry, Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit, Vol. 1, lviii.

consider the background to Hegel's interest in magnetism: the history of the subject, possible influences on Hegel, when he first formulated his views, etc.

Franz Anton Mesmer (1733-1815), a Swabian physician, discovered that passing magnets or magnetized objects over the bodies of patients often seemed to have a curative effect.⁴¹ It was not long before he found that he could achieve the same effect simply by passing his hands over his patients and lulling them into a trancelike state. This latter technique was also referred to as magnetism--though it was often called mesmerism, solarism, and tellurism--and is today almost universally referred to as hypnotism. Hegel refers to the relationship between the mesmerist and his subject as "magical" (PS § 406, Z; Petry II, 299). Mesmer made his techniques known in Paris in the 1770s. In 1784 a royal commission led by none other than Benjamin Franklin investigated Mesmer's claims and declared them absolutely without foundation. This did not stop patients (particularly women) from flocking to Mesmer's salon. Celebrities like Mozart took an interest in Mesmer's work.⁴² By this time, Mesmer had developed his own technology, chiefly represented by the baguet.

41. Paracelsus was apparently the first to study the healing powers of magnets. Recently the idea has become fashionable again. See Benz, Theology of Electricity, 5.
 42. Ibid., 21; Benz writes: "It is interesting to note that some Mozart compositions for glass harmonica were written for Mesmer, who had introduced Mozart to this instrument at his house."

According to Hegel, "This consists of a vessel, with iron rods which are touched by the persons to be magnetized, and constitutes the intermediary between them and the magnetizer" (PS § 406, Z; Petry, 297). Scientific respectability, however, continued to elude Mesmer. In 1812 things began to change. The Prussian government took an interest in mesmerism and set up a commission to study it. The Germans proved more favorable to the subject than the French, and a number of sympathetic and open-minded studies began appearing, most of which Mesmer did not live to see.⁴³ Before long mesmerism became academically respectable. Therefore, Hegel was not risking censure by discussing it.

Schelling was the first among the German idealists to develop an enthusiasm for mesmerism. In a letter to Hegel dated January 11, 1807, Schelling breathlessly discusses certain experiments concerning metal and water divining and pendulums. He recommends that Hegel perform these experiments himself, writing that "It is an actual magic incident to the human being, no animal is able to do it. Man actually breaks forth as a sun among other beings, all

43. See for example, C.A.F. Kluge, Versuch einer Darstellung des animalischen Magnetismus (Berlin, 1811; 2nd ed. 1816, 3rd ed. 1819); C.C. Wolfart, Mesmerismus oder System der Wechselwirkungen (Amsterdam: Bonset, 1966), and Erläuterungen zum Mesmerismus (Berlin, 1815).

of which are his planets."⁴⁴ Schelling followed up with a letter dated March 22:

As for the experiments about which I wrote you recently, things are nonetheless continuing to progress and prove indeed correct. [The Italian peasant dowser Francesco] Campetti's superior strength permits its employment in a manner excluding all illusion. Thin sheets of tin--as likewise broad and heavy plates of metal--revolve with the greatest regularity when placed on his index or middle finger. What is most profound in the matter is the undeniably nonmechanical, magical influence of the will, or of even the most fleeting thought, on these experiments. The pendulum--like the [divining] rod--behaves just like a muscle activated by free will, just as muscles on the other hand are veritable divining rods which oscillate now outward--extensors--and now inward--flexors . . . 45

In the same letter, Schelling suggested to Hegel that he consult an article by his brother Karl on animal magnetism.⁴⁶ Karl Eberhard Schelling (1783-1854) was

44. Quoted in Petry, Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit, Vol. 2, 517.

45. Quoted in Butler, Hegel: The Letters, 78.

46. Karl Schelling, "Ideen und Erfahrungen über den tierschen Magnetismus," Jahrbücher für Medizin als Wissenschaft 2 (1807): 1-42; 158-90.

trained as a physician. In Jena in 1801-02 he attended some of Hegel's classes. In 1805 he settled in Stuttgart as a general practitioner, where he published a revised and expanded version of his thesis "Über das Leben und seine Erscheinung." In this work, Karl Schelling advanced a theory of life which involved a World Soul partitioning itself into individual souls. His treatment of the Aether, sleep, disease, and death is also reminiscent of Hegel's.⁴⁷ In 1821, Hegel's sister Christianne came under the care of Schelling. She had been forced to quit her job as a governess in 1814 due to a nervous disorder. For a short time she had even committed herself to an asylum, upon leaving which she returned to Stuttgart. Hegel, of course, recommended that Christianne be treated by Schelling, who apparently did so without recompense. It is likely that the treatments included "magnetic" or Mesmeric therapy.

Hegel shared the Schelling brothers' enthusiasm for animal magnetism and the paranormal. In an 1810 letter to van Ghert, Hegel writes:

I was very interested to hear that you are occupying yourself with animal magnetism. To me this dark region of the organic conditions seems to merit great attention because, among other reasons, ordinary physiological opinions here vanish. It is precisely

47. See Petry, Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit, Vol. 2, 562.

the simplicity of animal magnetism which I hold to be most noteworthy. . . . Its operation seems to consist in the sympathy into which one animal individuality is capable of entering with a second, insofar as the sympathy of the first with itself, its fluidity in itself, is interrupted and hindered. That [sympathetic] union [of two organisms] leads life back again into its pervasive universal stream. The general idea I have of the matter is that the magnetic state belongs to the simple universal life, a life which thus behaves and generally manifests itself as a simple soul, as the scent of life in general undifferentiated into particular systems, organs, and their specialized activities.⁴⁸

Hegel's letter is a response to a letter from van Ghert, dated June 22, 1810, in which van Ghert described how he had been experimenting with animal magnetism on a relative for six months. Van Ghert asks Hegel to remind him about his (Hegel's) theory of animal magnetism, "which you provided us with in the *Philosophy of Nature* and which I have forgotten."⁴⁹ As I discussed in Chapter Four, van Ghert was a student at Jena in 1804-06 and took Hegel's

48. Butler, 590; Hoffmeister #166. In the *Philosophy of Spirit*, Hegel mentions van Ghert's work on animal magnetism, along with that of the alchemist J.B. van Helmont (PS 406, Z; Petry II, 303-307).

49. Quoted in Petry, *Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit*, Vol. 2, 560.

classes. As we shall see, Hegel's views on animal magnetism which he summarizes in the quote above are identical to the views later expressed in the mature Philosophy of Subjective Spirit, proving that Hegel's interest in the topic dates back at least to Jena and that his views on it remained fairly constant. Van Ghert published two works on animal magnetism--Dagboek der magnetische Behandeling van Meijufvrouw B*** (1814), and Mnemosyne, of aantekeningen van merkwaardige verschijnsels van het animalisch magnetismus (1815)--both of which Hegel read and admired, and mentioned in his lectures (e.g. PS § 406; Petry II, 303).

Schelling and Van Ghert were not the only two men with whom Hegel corresponded regarding animal magnetism. In an 1818 letter to Victor Cousin, written while Hegel was a professor in Heidelberg, Hegel states that "I have written a letter to Herr [Adam Karl] Eschenmayer on your behalf. A philosopher, he is above all a friend of animal magnetism."⁵⁰ (In the same letter, Hegel mentions that he will be moving to Berlin the following fall.) It is interesting to note that while in Heidelberg, Hegel sat in on mesmeric and spiritualist sittings (or "seances") with his friend Franz Josef Schelver.⁵¹ While in Berlin Hegel borrowed a book on the history of witchcraft and

50. Butler, 633; Hoffmeister #344.

51. Helmut Schneider, "Zur Dreiecks-Symbolik bei Hegel" Hegel-Studien 8 (1973): 55-77; 74.

somnambulism from his teaching assistant Friedrich Wilhelm Carove.⁵² During the same period, he also excerpted an essay by D. G. Kieser on "second sight."⁵³

Hegel thinks that for magnetism to take place it is necessary that the will of the magnetizer be stronger than that of the patient. Hegel writes that "The main feature of this magical relationship is that a subject works upon an individual inferior to it in respect of freedom and independence of will. . . . It is for this reason that strong men are especially adept at magnetizing female persons" (PS § 406, Z; Petry II, 299-301). In explaining this phenomenon, Hegel introduces the concept of the genius (Genius): "By genius we are to understand the determining particularity of man, that which, in all situations and relationships, decides his action and his fate" (PS § 405; Petry II, 239). The genius is the "control" function of the individual.⁵⁴ In certain circumstances a man's genius can actually become someone else, as in mesmerism.

As I have already noted, Hegel regards the relationship between the mesmerist and subject as "magical." Hegel explains that this word is applied to "a

52. Briefe von und an Hegel, ed. J. Hoffmeister, Vol. 2. 2. Aufl. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1961), 243.

53. G.W.F. Hegel, Berliner Schriften, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1956), 691-92.

54. According to Petry, "In Hegel's day, 'Genie' was applied to Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Mozart, etc., 'Genius' to the atmosphere of a locality, tutelary spirits, Descartes' demon, etc." See Petry, Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit, Vol. 2, 496.

relationship of inner to outer or to something else generally, which dispenses with mediation. A power is magical when its operation is not determined by the connectedness, the conditions and mediations of objective relationships . . . " (PS § 405, Z; Petry II, 227). In Chapter Three I briefly mentioned K.J.H. Windischmann a theologian who was engaged in the study of magic, and with whom Hegel corresponded. I shall repeat the quotation I gave there from one of Windischmann's 1810 letters to Hegel:

Everything rests on the fundamental thought that what is temporal, finite, in a state of becoming . . . is the eternal itself comprehended in its evolution, development, and self-knowledge, and that the impenetrable Spirit must of necessity individualize itself and take form in the infinity and infinite diversity of moments, which in themselves can nonetheless be most sharply grasped. In this way equally numerous forms of one-sidedness and of incantation are possible and effective, each along the path of Spirit's development. All such forms must find their explication in this investigation, beginning with the first and full magical power of the Impenetrable--and of Nature surging forth everywhere--over man, proceeding through the isolation and

interlocking of moments, and ending with the penetration, illumination, and complete magical power of Spirit itself, which dissipates all magical incantation and constitutes the clarity and freedom of life itself.⁵⁵

In the context of the foregoing discussion of Subjective Spirit, Windischmann's remarks on magic clearly seem congenial to the Hegelian viewpoint, and may even have influenced Hegel. As I discussed in Chapter Three, Hegel was sympathetic to Windischmann's studies of magic. Further on in the Philosophy of Spirit, Hegel writes that "Absolute magic would be the magic of spirit as such. Spirit also subjects general objects to a magical infection, acts magically upon another spirit" (PS § 405, Z; Petry II, 229).⁵⁶ In private notes written in 1820-22, Hegel makes reference to the occultist Jean Baptiste van Helmont 1577-1644, father of the alchemist and Rosicrucian Francis Mercury van Helmont (see Chapter One), in connection with witchcraft and magic.

On the surface, it appears that all Hegel has in mind by "magic," and by the "magic" of magnetism, is simply

55. Quoted in Butler, Hegel: The Letters, 559; my italics.

56. In Six Mystical Points, Böhme writes that "Magic is the mother of eternity, of the being of all beings; for it creates itself, and is understood in desire." Quoted in Basarab Nicolescu, Science, Meaning and Evolution: The Cosmology of Jacob Böhme, trans. Rob Baker (New York: Parabola Books, 1991), 230.

psychological control. As we have seen, he speaks about magnetism being made possible by the strong-willed controlling the weak-willed. Hegel also speaks in the same context about various other kinds of "influence" that people can have on one another, none of which seems overtly "occult" or traditionally "magical." Hegel states that the most "unmediated" kind of magic that there is consists in the control that our mind has over our body. Again, it seems that there is nothing particularly "paranormal" here. Those who might be embarrassed by Hegel's interest in mesmerism will probably breathe a sigh of relief: At least he does not really believe in magic! They will be disappointed, however.

Hegel refers to the relationship of mother to child as a "magic tie" (PS § 405; Petry II, 223). In discussing the physiological effects a mother can have on the fetus, Hegel distinguishes between organic (organische) and psychic (psychische) causes. His use of "psychic" seems to be identical to our use of the term to refer to a supernatural influence of the mind, as the following lines bear out: "One hears, for example, of children coming into the world with an injured arm, either because the mother had actually broken hers or at least had knocked it so severely that she feared she had done so, or indeed on account of her having been frightened by the sight of someone else's broken arm" (PS § 405, Z; Petry II, 237). Hegel evinces no scepticism

about such reports. He goes on to give examples of clairvoyance, dowsing, "remote viewing" (as it would be called today), and even of a man who could read with his stomach! (PS § 406, Z; Petry II, 267). Hegel allows that frauds do exist, but he seems to regard his anecdotes as well-authenticated. In one amusing example, Hegel tells how the arch-rationalist Friedrich Nicolai, looking down his street one day, had a vision in which he seemed to see not the actual houses that were there, but structures which had stood there at some earlier time. Hegel remarks with acid wit--ridiculing the scientific reductionism of rationalists like Nicolai--that "The predominantly physical basis of the poetic illusion of this otherwise entirely prosaic individual became apparent through its being dispelled by the application of leeches to his rectum" (PS § 406; Petry II, 269).

Hegel writes that he believes that mesmerism (and, by implication, other sorts of "supernatural" phenomena) is now thoroughly understood, and that no new data is likely to arise (PS § 406; Petry II, 303). He believes that the Understanding (or "finite thought") is incapable of comprehending supernatural phenomena precisely because, as he put it in his letter to van Ghert (see above), "ordinary physiological opinions here vanish." Understanding insists on a mechanistic explanation and refuses to believe in the existence of any kind of unmediated causal relationship--

and that, recall, is exactly what a "magical" relationship is for Hegel. In other words, the Understanding is faulty because, among other things, it does not believe in magic. Hegel writes that "In the experience of animal magnetism . . . it is within this very region of external appearances that the Understanding's connection between causes and effects, with its condition of spatial and temporal determinations, loses its validity, and in sensuous determinate being itself, together with its conditionality, that the higher nature of Spirit makes itself effective and becomes apparent" (PS § Ein Fragment zur Philosophie des Geistes, 1822-25; Petry I, 99). Hegel writes, further, that comprehension of magnetism and psychic phenomena is impossible "in so far as one presupposes personalities independent of one another and of the content of an objective world, and assumes spatial and material juxtaposition to be generally absolute" (PS § 406; Petry II, 253).

In the Introduction to the Philosophy of Spirit, Hegel writes that "In recent times, especially in the case of animal magnetism, the substantial unity of the soul and the power of its ideality have even become apparent as a matter of experience. This has discredited all the rigid distinctions drawn by the Understanding, and it has become immediately obvious that if contradictions are to be resolved, a speculative consideration is necessary" (PS §

379; Petry I, 15). Hegel's "speculative consideration" consists in maintaining that in psychic states Spirit sinks down into identity with the "feeling subjectivity" of the Soul. In other words, in psychic states such as precognition or telepathy a regression to a sub-rational, "natural" state is involved (this would be most evident in the case of a trance state).

By leaving behind intellect and individuality, we lose ourselves in primordial oneness with all things and are thus capable of "tapping into" lines of connection that we are not ordinarily, consciously aware of.⁵⁷ Phenomena such as mind-reading or remote viewing become possible in such a state. Hegel is quick to point out, however, that psychic states are not a "higher" faculty or level of Spirit. In fact, as I have already said, they involve a descent into the lowest depths of Spirit (Hegel suggests, interestingly, that psychic phenomena are much more prevalent in rural areas, under primitive conditions, such as in the Scottish Highlands [PS § 406, Z; Petry II, 287]). Hegel points out, quite correctly, that although psychic phenomena are remarkable, they are usually unreliable and useless. Dreams sometimes present portents, but also much else that is meaningless, and so they are not reliable guides to action. The ability to levitate a teacup using the power

57. Sean Kelly argues that here Hegel has come close yet again to Jung's "collective unconscious" and especially his theory of "synchronicity" (Kelly, 50-52).

of mind alone is remarkable, but much more difficult and time and energy-consuming than simply lifting the cup with one's hand.

Nevertheless, given the nature of dialectic, we might expect that in some way the highest level of Spirit will be a "return" to and sublation of the lowest: i.e., philosophy will constitute a "circling back" to psychic phenomena. Indeed this is the case. In the Introduction to the Philosophy of Spirit, Hegel writes that in magnetism "spirit visibly liberates itself from the limits of time and space and from all finite connections, and the phenomena have, therefore, something of an affinity with philosophy" (PS § 379; Petry I, 23). Hegel writes later that Space pertains to external nature not to the Soul, and that when external nature is apprehended by the Soul "it ceases to be spatial, for it is no longer external either to itself or us once the ideality of the Soul has transformed it. Consequently, when free and understanding consciousness sinks into that form of the Soul which is mere feeling, the subject is no longer bound to space" (PS § 406, Z; Petry II, 277). Hegel goes on to speak similarly regarding time.

The implication here is that in order to understand psychic states we must not regard the Soul as spatially distinct from the world. Further, in psychic states Soul and world overlap. This happens when we sink into a

certain primitive mode of being, but it also happens when we achieve philosophical understanding, when the world really does cease to be "external either to itself or us once the ideality of the Soul has transformed it." Psychic states are a fleeting, unreliable, fundamentally subconscious and subrational way in which the subject-object division is overcome and the world is made our own. In philosophy, we can achieve, consciously, a state in which we rise above space and time, and in which external relation or "otherness" is cancelled. With philosophy, and in general with the human project of remaking the given, the world becomes no longer other but rather that which is understood and willed. Hegel writes that "It is true that the human Spirit is able to raise itself above knowledge concerned exclusively with the singularity of what is sensuously present, but it is only in the Conceptual cognition of the eternal that this elevation is absolute. . . . In the magnetic state, however, there can be no more than a conditioned rising above knowledge of what is immediately present" (PS § 406, Z; Petry II, 281-83). In short, philosophy is a higher type of magic.

This conclusion should not seem surprising. I have already quoted Hegel stating, in a fragment preserved by Rosenkranz, that "Every individual is a blind link in the chain of absolute necessity, along which the world develops. Every individual can raise himself to domination

over a great length of this chain only if he realizes the goal of this great necessity and, by virtue of this knowledge, learns to speak the magic words which evoke its shape."⁵⁸

As I noted in Chapter Four, just as the magicians of old--men such as Agrippa and Bruno--believed that knowledge of the right incantations could give one tremendous power, so Hegel believes that knowledge of the "magic words" that evoke the Absolute can empower the individual by making him self confident and at peace with the world. The man of full Selbstbewusstsein (self-consciousness) is selbstbewusst (confident, self-assured). Recall also from the Phenomenology that "tarrying with the negative" is "the magical power" which Spirit uses to "convert" the negative "into being." To use Hegel's own term (quoted earlier), Hegel's philosophy is "absolute magic," "the magic of Spirit as such."

It is interesting to compare Hegel's understanding of magic with Böhme's. In Six Mystical Points (1620), Böhme writes that "Magic is the mother of eternity, of the being of all beings; for it creates itself, and is understood in desire. . . . It is in itself nothing but a will, and this will is the great mystery of all wonders and secrets, but brings itself by the imagination of the desireful hunger into being. . . . In Magic are all forms of the Being of

58. Rosenkranz, 141.

all beings."⁵⁹ As we have seen, Hegel holds merely that magic is action of one thing on another which is unmediated (so, for example, the control of the mind over the body is "magical," because there is no third thing acting as intermediary). This is obviously a much thinner conception of magic than what Böhme has explained. Nevertheless, there is a parallelism between Böhme's magic and what I have called the "high magic" of the dialectic itself.

Note that Böhme says that magic "creates itself." As we have seen, the speculative philosopher does not create or invent the dialectic; instead it unfolds itself before him (and this is why there is no distinction between form and content). Further, Böhme claims that in this self-creating magic are "all forms of the Being of all beings," which should remind us of the Logic. Böhme also refers to the "first Magia" as "God in his triad."⁶⁰ This is a reference to the initial dialectic of sour-sweet-bitter, of God in Himself. Böhme is treating his own proto-dialectic of the "source-spirits" as a kind of high magic. Finally, and most striking of all, Böhme refers to magic as that "which makes within itself where there is nothing; which makes something out of nothing . . . "⁶¹ This comes close to Hegel's treatment of magic as an unmediated act, an act employing no medium or matter or "raw material." The

59. Böhme, Sämtliche Werke (Leipzig: J.A. Barth, 1846), "Sechs Puncta Mystica," V, I, 407.

60. Ibid.

61. Quoted in Nicolescu, 211.

dialectic of the Logic is precisely such a creation of something (Etwas) out of nothing (Nichts). On Böhme's terms, Voegelin's treatment of Hegel as a magician becomes quite plausible.

Hegel's system can not only be likened to a kind of High Magic (and his texts likened to a grimoire, as Eric Voegelin would have it⁶²), it can also be seen as providing us with a metaphysics and a logic which would make more sense out of paranormal phenomena than can the dominant scientific perspective. J.N. Findlay notes that the phenomena of extra-sensory perception "accord well" with the Hegelian system.⁶³ "Hegel's ready credence for these reported phenomena," Findlay notes, "is due to their conformity with the principles of his own philosophy."⁶⁴ Hegel correctly charges modern science with attempting to understand everything in terms of mechanism and external relations.

In our own time only certain interpreters of quantum theory, such as Heisenberg, have seen the necessity of eschewing these assumptions. Recently, Hegelians who have been trained in science (for example, Errol E. Harris), have suggested that the Hegelian logic and metaphysics can

62. Eric Voegelin, "On Hegel: A Study in Sorcery," in The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Vol. 12, Published Essays, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 249.

63. See Findlay's Foreword to Hegel's Philosophy of Mind, trans. William Wallace and A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), xiv.

64. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-Examination, 295.

make more sense out of such quantum phenomena as non-locality and indeterminacy than can traditional approaches.⁶⁵ Science has revealed a world much more strange and baffling than that which confronted Newton and Descartes. Some of the paradoxes of quantum reality, however, could be glimpsed on the macroscopic level years before Heisenberg, in the form of paranormal phenomena. To be sure, much that has been reported as evidence of the paranormal has been fraudulent, but "hard" science is no stranger to fraud either, and Hegel is entirely correct to maintain that many reports are well-authenticated and deserving of serious study.

4. The Five Elements

Ernst Benz writes that "We must not overlook or even negate the fact that the language of modern natural science and cosmology has its roots in mystical natural philosophy; we must be aware that knowledge and mystery are of necessity interrelated."⁶⁶ I have already mentioned the work of authors such as Allen G. Debus, P.O. Kristeller, Stephen A. McKnight, D.P. Walker, and Frances Yates, among others, all of whom argue for the influence of alchemy,

65. See Errol E. Harris, The Foundations of Metaphysics in Science (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1965), Formal, Transcendental and Dialectical Thinking (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), "The Naturphilosophie Updated" in Harris's The Spirit of Hegel (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993).

66. Benz, Theology of Electricity, 74.

Kabbalism, magic, and hermeticism in general on the modern scientific mentality. Hegel lived at a time when it was not unusual for a serious man of science to be interested in these subjects.⁶⁷ This is not to deny that the prevailing opinion was that these "sciences" were worthless, but there were hold-outs. Hegel and the Schelling brothers, as well as Goethe, Oetinger, Baader, Herder, Steffens, Ritter, and others, are to be numbered among the hold-outs.

Although it would be difficult to prove that Hegel consciously set out to unite Hermeticism with modern science and modern philosophy, this is what his system in fact amounts to, as I have been arguing all along. As David Walsh puts it: "What Hegel set out to do was to integrate the rationality of modern science with the penumbra of larger spiritual expectations which have also been an abiding feature of the modern world. It is perhaps the most impressive attempt at reconciling science with pseudo-science."⁶⁸ Writing of Schelling's

67. One of the most famous such cases, of course, is that of Isaac Newton. Ernst Benz notes that the terms "attraction" and "repulsion" made their way into Newton's science via his teacher, the Cambridge Platonist and theosophist Henry More. More got them from an English translation of Böhme's Mysterium Magnum. See Benz, Ibid., 74.

68. Walsh, "Mythology of Reason," 159. It was Oetinger's belief that the separation of scientific and religious knowledge in modern times was extremely dangerous (see Benz, Theology of Electricity, 95-96). In Chapter Three I have argued that Hegel's system is an attempt to give us a new experience of the world in which nature as understood

Naturphilosophie, Antoine Faivre notes that "The relationship to alchemy is obvious, so much so that Schelling's Naturphilosophie appeared from the beginning as an attempt to bring together the traditional givens of pansophy and the spirit of Kantian philosophy."⁶⁹ The same is true of Hegel: there is an important and, in fact, obvious, influence of alchemy on the Philosophy of Nature.

Central to alchemy is the ancient Greek doctrine of the four elements: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. When Hegel speaks of "the square" he generally has in mind the four elements. I have already discussed this matter briefly in Chapter Three. Squareness as a "symbolic form" figures prominently in Hegel's early Philosophy of Nature. Recall that in the "Triangle Fragment" the "triangle of triangles" is made to become at one point a square. Also, as I suggested, the triangle diagram may refer to the four elements in its use of four triangles.

As we have seen, the triadic form dominates Hegel's system, but in his early philosophy he apparently held that whereas the triangle predominates as a symbolic form in the realm of Spirit, the square is the key to the realm of nature. Consider the third of Hegel's twelve doctoral examination questions from 1801: "The square is the law of nature, the triangle of mind [mens]." This view is still

by modern science is re-invested with the experience of the numinous lost with the death of the mythical consciousness. 69. Antoine Faivre, Access to Western Esotericism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 83.

to be found in the mature Philosophy of Nature. Hegel does not, to be sure, organize that work in a quadratic form--it is triadic like all the others--but the quadratic form does crop up within a number of different divisions. Before looking at the Philosophy of Nature and the occurrence of the four elements there, let us look back at some of the earlier works.

In Rosenkranz's report of the "Triangle Fragment," after describing the three triangles of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, he writes that

This triangular construction is now followed out in detail by Hegel through nature, though with frequent desertion of the premisses picture-image, and with a peculiar mingling of purely logical and pictorial characteristics. The Sun is called the negative unity of his system. The Earth is supposed to beget the antithesis of air and water, and what is more, to do it in such a way that they do not divide from one another in polluted form, but each expresses the opposite in itself and destroys itself, the air fattens itself with water, the water with air, and thereby both become at the same time so tensed, that they come to the leaping-point [Sprung], where each passes over into its opposite; and so on.⁷⁰

70. Quoted in Harris, Night Thoughts, 188.

In Hegel's so-called "First Philosophy of Spirit" (1803-4), he treats Consciousness as the "ideality of nature" and then offers the following opaque observations: "The elements in which [consciousness] exists as middle are just the elements of air and earth, as the indifferent self-identical elements, not the unrest of fire and water⁷¹; for consciousness only is qua absolutely self-identical, and qua existing middle it is posited as a quiescent indifferent middle. As concept of consciousness this middle is in that element which is the simple self-identical one among the elements; its external middle [medium] is the air."⁷² In the Phenomenology Hegel writes:

In the same way that nature displays itself in the universal elements of Air, Water, Fire, and Earth: Air is the enduring, purely universal, and transparent element; Water, the element that is perpetually sacrificed; Fire, the unity which energizes them into opposition while at the same time it perpetually

71. Oetinger held that fire and water are a dynamic pair which gives rise to all beings. See Schneider, 95. This position is stated outright by Hegel in the Realphilosophie of 1803-04: "Feur und Wasser [sind] die Grund-Anfänge und Elemente aller Dinge." He also refers to them as "tätig," active. Jenenser Realphilosophie, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister, Vol. I (Leipzig, 1931), 47, 44.

72. Hegel, System of Ethical Life, 215. Hegel, System der Sittlichkeit, Zweiter Auflage, ed. G. Lasson (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1923), 277. There is much more to this passage that is quite interesting, particularly in its treatment of the Aether, but I cannot deal with it here.

resolves the opposition; lastly, Earth, which is the firm and solid knot of this articulated whole, the subject of these elements and of their process, that from which they start and to which they return; so in the same way, the inner essence or simple Spirit of self-conscious actuality displays itself in similar such universal--but here spiritual--masses or spheres, displays itself in a world [Miller, 300].

Turning to the Philosophy of Nature, we find that Hegel is still moving within the same thought-world as late as the Berlin period. In one of the Zusätze from 1819-30, he refers to polarity, saying that "there is also a positing of the return out of the opposition into unity, and it is this third term which constitutes the necessity of the Concept, a necessity which is not found in polarity" (PN § 248, Z; Petry I, 211). Here again we meet with the familiar claim that a full account of the real must consist of a triad of moments. Hegel goes on, however, to say that "In nature taken as otherness, the square or tetrad also belongs to the whole form of necessity, as in the four elements, the four colors, etc.; the pentad may also be found, in the five fingers and the five senses for example; but in Spirit the fundamental form of necessity is the triad" (ibid.). This particular aspect of Hegel--the obsession with dyads, triads, tetrads, pentads,

mathematico-geometrical constructions of all kinds--might be called his Pythagorean side.

Section 281 of the Philosophy of Nature is entitled "The Elements" (Die Elemente). This and the following sections, including the Zusätze from 1819-1830, must be taken as representing his mature understanding of the four elements. Hegel states that "The air corresponds to light, for it is passive light which has sunk to the level of a moment" (PN § 281, Z; Petry II, 34). Like Hegel's other remarks on the four elements this is hardly clear. Perhaps he means that air, like light, permeates everything, and air is to be thought of as "extinguished light" (later Hegel states that air "is a slumbering fire" [PN § 282, Z; Petry II, 38]). Hegel refers to fire and water as the "elements of opposition." He says that fire corresponds to the lunar plane, and water to the cometary. He has little to say on the subject of earth in this initial treatment.

Some paragraphs later, we find Hegel saying that air "constitutes the universal ideality of everything akin to it; that it is the universal in relation to its other, and that it effaces all opposing particularity" (PN § 284, Z; Petry II, 41). Fire "is the same universality, but it appears as such, and therefore has the form being-for-self, it is existent ideality therefore, or the nature of air which has passed into existence; by appearing, it reduces its other to an appearance." Water, on the other hand, is

"passive neutrality" (ibid.). Hegel refers to earth as "the individual element" (individuelles Element). It is the element "of developed difference . . . In its distinctness from the other moments, this element is as yet indeterminate; as the totality which holds together the variety of these moments in individual unity, however, it is the power which stimulates and sustains their process" (PN § 285; Petry II, 41).

At the beginning of his remarks on Organics, Hegel refers to the terrestrial, vegetable, and animal organisms as belonging to the "Kingdom of Earth," "Kingdom of Water," and "Kingdom of Fire," respectively (PN § 337, 2; Petry III, 12-14). What is omitted, of course, is the "Kingdom of Air"--pneuma, spiritus--which Hegel could not consider here, for this Kingdom stands outside nature. Under his treatment of the Animal Organism, Hegel suggests correspondences between the senses and the elements: touch is the sense of the "mechanical sphere" and thus corresponds to earth and fire (which seems to mean density and temperature) touch is "the sense of the earthy element." Smell and taste, the "senses of opposition," correspond to air and water. Sight corresponds to light, and hearing doesn't seem to correspond to anything, but is simply the reception of "the manifestations of internal being, which reveals itself as such in its expression" (PN § 358; Petry III, 138-39).

It might be charged that I am guilty of a non sequitur in assuming that Hegel's use of the four elements is evidence of alchemical influence. After all, the doctrine originates with Empedocles and was developed systematically by Aristotle. Isn't this just evidence of Greek influence? Certainly the history of the doctrine was known to Hegel and his contemporaries (Hegel even mentions Empedocles in connection with it [PN § 281, Z; Petry II, 34]). Nevertheless, by Hegel's time the doctrine of the four elements was so closely associated with alchemy that his use of it could not have failed to have a strong alchemical connotation not only for his listeners and readers, but for himself as well. As I discussed in Chapter Two, alchemy was still very much on the scene in Hegel's day. Thus Hegel's use of the four elements would invariably have "pegged" him in the minds of his listeners as someone following in the footsteps of Goethe, someone who still saw some truth in the "Hermetic art." After introducing the four elements in the Philosophy of Nature, Hegel remarks ruefully that "No educated person, and certainly no physicist or chemist is now permitted, under any circumstances, to mention the four elements" (PN § 281, Z; Petry II, 34). Hegel is deliberately and boldly risking ridicule in order to hold fast to what he regards as an important truth.

H.S. Harris writes that "Hegel's continual appeals to the four elements of this mortal world are not poetic or metaphorical."⁷³ He believes in a literal fire, air, water, and earth (or: fieriness, airiness, liquidity, earthiness). The analogies Hegel makes between the elements and the five senses and the levels of Spirit, the heavenly bodies, as well as other types of being, should be understood as correspondences in the old-fashioned, Hermetico-magical sense. It was common in magic and alchemy and related subjects for practitioners to devise elaborate tables of correspondences between the elements of one sphere of being and another. According to Agrippa the four elements of fire, air, water and earth correspond to the four angels ruling over the corners of the earth (Seraph, Cherub, Tharsis, Ariel), the four evangelists (Mark, John, Matthew and Luke), the four seasons, the four humors (choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, melancholic), the four princes of devils (Samael, Azazel, Azael, Mahazael), etc.⁷⁴ Should all this seem totally remote from Hegel's enterprise, it should also be noted that Agrippa holds that the four elements correspond to the senses: fire to sight, air to hearing, water to taste and smell, and earth to touch. The four elements also correspond to the "four elements of man": fire to the mind, air to spirit (recall

73. Harris, Introduction to System of Ethical Life, 203n.

74. See Agrippa, The Occult Philosophy, trans. by James Freake (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995), 257-259.

"Spiritus" from Chapter Three and my discussion of the elements there), water to the soul, and earth to body.⁷⁵

Despite Hegel's own use of correspondences, he nonetheless criticizes the practice in others, especially the Schellingian school! In the Philosophy of Nature, we find the following:

Schelling and Steffens have drawn a parallel between the planetary series and that of metals. This is an ingenious and pregnant comparison, but it is not a new idea, for the representation of Venus by copper, Mercury by quicksilver, the Earth by iron, Jupiter by tin, and Saturn by lead, is a commonplace, just as it is to call the Sun golden and the Moon silver. There is something completely natural about this, for metals are the most compact and independent bodies to be found on Earth. The planets do not belong to the same field as the metals and the chemical process, however. Cross-references [Anspielungen] of this kind are external comparisons and decide nothing. They merely

75. Ibid., 259. That the soul corresponds to water also makes perfect sense from a Hegelian standpoint. The level of the Soul is one of undifferentiated neutrality, just as Hegel has described water as being. Also, much that happens on the level of the soul seems to be connected to or affected by water. Hegel states that "It is a fact that there is in man a general mood of sympathy with natural changes, with such elementary differences as water and metal, and that these are the general objects to which such sensitiveness responds. What is what is not singularized, not individualized, but among individualized bodies metal is what compact" (PS, Kehler MS. 83-85; Petry II, 263).

sparkle before the imagination without furthering the scope of knowledge. (PN § 280, Z; Petry II, 31-32)⁷⁶

Hegel also attacks correspondences in the Phenomenology. To repeat a line quoted earlier, Hegel writes that "Formalism in the Philosophy of Nature takes the form of teaching that understanding is electricity, animals are nitrogen, or equivalent to the South or North pole, and so on" (Miller, 30; PG, 37). Despite these statements, as we have seen Hegel frequently engaged in analogical "correspondence-thinking." H.S. Harris lists some of the correspondences to be found in Hegel's early philosophy: "Solar System/Volk; Earth with mineral--or, meteorological--process/human organism with mind process; vegetable and animal kingdom/system of need and system of justice."⁷⁷ Perhaps the most famous--or infamous--example is the Dissertation of 1801, in which Hegel suggests that if we are to believe that nature conforms to a rational pattern, then we might do well to consider the ubiquitousness in nature and human thought of the number seven. The immediate inspiration for this idea comes from

76. Of course, these planetary-metallic correspondences figure largely in alchemy, and no doubt Schelling and Steffens were well aware of their source of inspiration. Hegel's treatment of this system as a "commonplace" and "not a new idea" is no doubt a reference to the alchemical-magical tradition.

77. Harris, Night Thoughts, 68.

the Timaeus.⁷⁸ Hegel suggests that it may be the case that there is some reason why the men of his day had identified only seven planets. Perhaps that is the right and necessary number of planets, Hegel hypothesizes.⁷⁹ Nor is this mind-set confined to Hegel's youth. His use of correspondences is to be seen not only in the examples given earlier, but in his entire system of nested triangles.

Hegel does not confine himself to the four familiar elements, however. He also deals with a fifth element, the Aether. I have already discussed the problematic role of this concept in Hegel's metaphysics. Here I shall both sum up what was said earlier, and offer more detail.

For Hegel the Aether is metaphysical bedrock--it is Hegel's Ungrund.⁸⁰ It is an ultimate plastic medium which is nothing in particular, but has the potentiality to

78. Harris writes that "What impressed Hegel about this ancient example, is that with seven moving bodies to organize in his World-Soul 'Timaeus' was already working with a series based on the powers of two and three. In this instinct of Reason Hegel saw a confirmation of his thesis that 'at all times there has been only one and the same philosophy'" (*Ibid.*, 93; my italics).

79. Adler, 302; Lasson, 398-99. Hegel does not "deduce" that there are seven and can be only seven planets, as is often claimed. His argument is, in fact, hypothetical. See G.W.F. Hegel, Dissertatio Philosophica de Orbitis Planetarum. Philosophische Erörterung über die Planetenbahnen, trans. with introduction and commentary, by Wolfgang Neuser (Weinheim: Acta humaniora d. VHC, 1986), 51. Robert Schneider has argued for the influence of the Oetingerite and "electrical theologian" J.L. Fricker on Hegel's Dissertation. See R. Schneider, 48.

80. See H.S. Harris, Night Thoughts, 771.

become everything.⁸¹ The Aether lies at the basis of all experience⁸², and is to be conceived as boundlessly active and fertile (hence I have sometimes referred to it as the "Aether-energy"). The Aether, as a kind of determinate nothingness, is pure thought, pure matter, pure space, and pure manifestation all at once. It can be all of these things because these represent the being of the Aether expressed in wholly different layers or levels of being. Aether expresses itself in the eternal thought-world of the Logic, and then as empty space,⁸³ the pure possibility of extension, then in the extension itself (the absolute other

81. Harris writes, "The aether is characterized objectively as 'absolute elasticity' and further as 'uncloudable transparency.' Unlike Aristotle's prime matter, it is an active potentiality. It is the unity of intellect and thing, not 'prime' but 'absolute' matter, matter that can give itself form" (Ibid., 420). And: "The aether, as that which abides unchanged in all the changes which express its dynamic essence, is the 'Idea' of God" (Ibid., II, 305). Harris's discussions of Aether, in Night Thoughts and elsewhere, are the best survey of Hegel's "Aether doctrine" in English. By way of supporting my claims, I will offer further quotes from Harris in the next few notes. I will offer supporting quotations from Hegel in the next paragraph.

82. H.S. Harris writes, "[Hegel] is trying to find the most abstractly general description of the unformed element or medium, which takes on different shapes and patterns in every human language and in every other aspect of communal life and experience" (Introduction to System of Ethical Life, 193). And "The ether is the energy that is absolutely conserved, the continuum at the basis of all experience" (H.S. Harris, editorial note in G.W.F. Hegel, The Jena System, 1804-5: Logic and Metaphysics, trans. and ed. John W. Burbidge and George di Giovanni, introduction and notes by H.S. Harris [Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986], 172).

83. Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 8 (henceforth, Differenz), ed. Hartmut Buchner and Otto Pöggler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), 4, 14.

to thought) or absolute matter,⁸⁴ then in the world of matter as revealed, as light.⁸⁵ From these there follows an entire world of nature, including man.⁸⁶ As Böhme said, "the world's existence is nothing else than coagulated smoke from the eternal aether, which thus has a fulfillment like the eternal."⁸⁷ Hegel also seems to conceive the Aether as the "life-force" inhabiting the Earth; it is a "World-Soul."⁸⁸ After climbing the initiatory ladder of the Phenomenology, we reach the level of Absolute Knowing and step onto the "aetherial plane." From this point on, we are in effect "swimming" in the Aether, noting--not creating--its forms first as ideas (moments of the Concept), then noting its expression in the "hard deposits"

84. Ibid., Vol. 7, 178, 1-2 and 188, 5-5; 280, 14-15.

Harris, again: "Matter as gravity is the self-positing of the aether which is the indifferent identity of the divine life, the creative power that expresses itself in all forms of real existence, whether conscious or unconscious, extended or intelligent" (Harris, Night Thoughts, 76).

85. Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 7, 218, 11; Vol. 8, 34, 17-36, 2. Harris, on Hegel's early Philosophy of Nature: "Hegel regards light as the showing forth of 'free force.' It is the 'totality' of the aether (which is polarized into the existing bodily units of the system)." Night Thoughts, 425.

86. Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 4, 467. Harris: "In the [early] Philosophy of Nature Hegel traces the evolution of the 'ether' (which he calls 'the Idea of God' but says is not 'the living God') from its primary positing as light and darkness, through the dynamic space-time equilibrium of the solar system, to the physical equilibrium of the earth-process, which sets the stage for organic life" (Editorial note in The Jena System, 186).

87. Six Theosophical Points, Ch. 2, Para. 19.

88. Harris writes, "The 'absolute life-force' which exists in the Earth, but which has thus achieved independent existence, is the aether which is the ultimate source of things." (Night Thoughts, 286). And: "The aether is a world-soul in the Greek sense, i.e. it is a life principle" (Ibid., 242).

of the Aether, which is nature. In seeing how the Aether has expressed itself in the human realm of Subjective and Objective Spirit, and in all the other realms, we ourselves constitute the self-reflection of the Aether, which is the Absolute.⁸⁹

H.S. Harris notes that like Hegel's treatment of fire, air, water, and earth, there is nothing figurative or metaphorical about Hegel's use of Aether.⁹⁰ Like Harris, I employ the "ae" diphthong to emphasize that we are dealing with a use of the term wholly different from the ordinary one, which refers to a gas.⁹¹ Nevertheless, Hegel's concept has something in common with the term as it was used by scientists of his day (including those of the maligned Newtonian school). Consider for now the following passage from the Dissertation of 1801: "The relation [ratio] among the distances of the celestial bodies . . . is determined by the line of cohesion. Separated from each other, their masses form centers of density opposed to the rarity of the Aether, points of extreme contraction opposed to extreme expansion. Hence physicists ascribe absolute elasticity and repulsive force to the Aether, while

89. Harris: "Hegel conceives pure thinking as the self-comprehension of the ether because in this way he can close the circle of experience. Spirit and nature are the subjective and objective aspects of the ether, which is their logical ground-concept or absolute identity" (Jena System, 172-173).

90. Harris, Night Thoughts, 771.

91. Harris, Introduction to System of Ethical Life, 202-203n.

attributing attractive force to bodies, to which alone they refer the force of gravity, and not to the Aether."⁹² (We have already encountered the dyad contraction-expansion, to which I shall return shortly, in the Phenomenology's Böhmean Lucifer myth, as well as in Oetinger and the Kabbalah.)

By way of supporting the above claims, simply consider the following occurrences of Aether in Hegel's early writings, of which there are many other examples.⁹³ I shall quote at length Hegel's first transition from Idea to Nature, for its significance as an initial exposition of the Aether doctrine:

As the determinate being which has gone back into its Concept, the Idea may now be called absolute matter or Aether. It is apparent that this has the same significance as Pure Spirit, for this absolute matter is in no way sensuously present, but is the Concept as pure Concept in itself. As such it is Existent Spirit. . . . Aether in its simplicity and self-equality is therefore the indeterminate soul of Spirit; it is motionless quiescence or the being which

92. Adler, 300; Lasson, 394-95.

93. Hegel mentions the Aether as early as "Eleusis," his 1796 poem addressed to Hölderlin: "Welcome you noble spirits, you sublime shadows, from whose foreheads perfection beams. / That thought does not take fright. I feel it is also of my own homeland-- / This aether, this earnestness, this brilliance surrounding You." (Butler, 46; Hoffmeister, #18).

is perpetually returning into itself from otherness. It is the substance and being of all things, that which is absolutely elastic and despises every form, but which is likewise absolutely plastic, giving itself and expressing every form. Aether is therefore Being . . . it constitutes everything. It has nothing external to it and does not change, for it is the dissolution of everything, the simple purity of negativity, the fluidity of undisturbable transparency. . . . In so far as it is said to be Aether or absolute matter, it is in itself, or pure self-consciousness . . . This determinateness of non-determinate being passes over into determinate being, however, and the element of reality is the universal determinateness in which spirit has its being as nature.⁹⁴

In Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* of 1803-04 he writes that the "speaking of the Aether with itself is its reality . . . What it utters is itself, what speaks is itself, and that to which it speaks is again itself."⁹⁵ In the so-called "First Philosophy of Spirit" of 1803-4, Hegel writes that in the "second part" of philosophy, "Idea fell absolutely apart in the *Philosophy of Nature*; absolute Being, the Aether, sundered itself from its becoming or

94. Jenenser Realphilosophie, Vol. 2, 3-4.

95. Quoted in Harris, Night Thoughts, 243.

Infinity, and the union of the two was the inner aspect, the buried [essence] which lifted itself out in the organism and exists in the form of singularity, that is, as a numerical unit . . . "96 Then, in the same text: "In the Spirit the absolutely simple Aether has returned to itself by way of the infinity of the Earth; in the Earth as such this union of the absolute simplicity of Aether and infinity exists; it spreads into the universal fluidity, but its spreading fragments itself as singular things "97 Elsewhere, Hegel states that "In the indifference of light, the Aether has scattered its absolute indifference into a multiplicity; in the blooms of the solar system it has born its inner Reason and totality out into expansion."98 Later in the same essay: "the Aether, which permeates nature, is the inseparable essence of the Gestalten of nature."99

Nor is Aether confined simply to the early manuscripts. In the Preface to the Phenomenology Hegel writes, "Pure self-recognition in absolute otherness, this Aether as such, is the ground and soil of Science or knowledge in general. The beginning of philosophy presupposes or requires that consciousness should dwell in this element" (Miller, 14; PG, 19). Aether begins

96. System of Ethical Life, 205-06; System der Sittlichkeit, 268.

97. Ibid., 206; 265-266;.

98. Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 4, 464.

99. Ibid., 467.

appearing in Hegel's manuscripts around 1803 and continues to be prominent until about 1806. However, after the Jena period Aether, as it were, dissipates. It no longer appears as a major category of the Philosophy of Nature, or any other part of the system. From time to time, it puts in a very minor appearance, e.g. in Organics in the Philosophy of Nature: "This constitutes the initiation of the living subject, soul, aetheriality, the essential process of articulation into members and expansion" (PN § 337, Z; Petry III, 13).

Nowhere in Hegel's writings or lectures is there any suggestion that he dropped the Aether doctrine because he decided it was wrong. He apparently decided that it was not necessary to the public exposition (i.e., teaching) of his philosophy. Had Hegel written a full-blown treatment of the Philosophy of Nature, on the scale of the Science of Logic, the Aether might have reappeared. (In the last chapter I also suggested a more interesting reason for why Hegel might have abandoned the Aether). Nonetheless much of the content of the Aether doctrine remains intact in the mature system: e.g., the equivalence of the concepts of Pure Being, Pure Thought, Pure Space, Pure manifestation (Light; also, physicalized or existent Space), Pure annihilation of finitude (Time), and Absolute Matter. As I said earlier, these are "existent idealities," purely formal beings that nevertheless exist in the world and

constitute the eidetic bedrock in their different regions of being.

Aether was a concept that figured largely not only in the mainstream science of his Hegel's time but also in Hermetic thought. The ancient Greeks believed that Aether (from aithein, to burn) was a kind of divine, dynamic air existing above mundane air and possessing a fire-essence. The concept figures in the philosophies of Anaxagoras and Democritus. Aristotle makes Aether the fifth element, but holds that it is different from the other four in being indestructible and unchanging. Aether moves in a circle, which is the perfect form of motion for Aristotle (the importance of circularity to Hegel may indicate one reason why he hit on the Aether as a significant concept, since he was undoubtedly familiar with Aristotle's doctrine). All the heavenly bodies and their spheres are composed of this incorruptible substance. The Stoics identified the Aether with pneuma or spirit. Unlike Aristotle, the Stoics held that Aether-pneuma is found not only in the heavens but in earthly matter as well. The Stoics make use of the Aether in their physical theory in order to explain, among other things, the transmission of light. In these early Aristotelian and Stoic accounts of Aether, we can already see much of Hegel's doctrine. John Duns Scotus and William of Occam in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth

centuries were chiefly responsible for introducing Aether-speculation into scholasticism.

Paracelsus referred to Aether as a "fifth element," as the substance of stars and souls, and spoke of an "Aether Body." In the modern period, the Aether-function was taken over in the thought of Descartes by "subtle matter," which exists wherever gross matter appears to be absent. This position was forced upon Descartes due to his insistence that matter is identical to spatial extension. Again, we see a parallel to Hegel: Aether is both Space and Absolute Matter. Like the Stoic Aether, Descartes's subtle matter, he held, is involved in the transmission of light. A number of writers, Robert Boyle prominent among them, charged that Aether or subtle matter was a mere posit, an unobservable, empirically unverifiable entity which ought to be jettisoned from physical theory. True to its physical nature, however, the concept of Aether proved indestructible.

Klaus Vondung writes that Newton presented his theory of Aether "as a Hermetic cosmogony in the language of science."¹⁰⁰ Newton held that Aether was a plenum, permeating all space. Aether is elastic for Newton, and

100. Klaus Vondung, "Millenarianism, Hermeticism, and the Search for a Universal Science," in Science, Pseudo-Science, and Utopianism in Early Modern Thought, ed. Stephen McKnight (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 138. See also Richard S. Westfall, "Newton and the Hermetic Tradition," in Science, Medicine and Society in the Renaissance, ed. Allen G. Debus (New York: Science History Publications, 1972), 2:183-98.

can condense and rarify. Vondung writes, further, that "Newton even put forward the hypothesis that aether, in its different degrees of condensation, is the substance of all bodies, and that it produces, by means of perpetual condensation and vaporization, the cycle of becoming and vanishing. . . . In Newton's early theory aether assumed the role of a divine creative quinta essencia."¹⁰¹ These elements in Newton's theory are seldom discussed. It is generally stated simply that Newton thought that gravitation might be explained by a subtle, elastic medium like Aether.

As the concept of action at a distance became more and more acceptable to scientists, Newton's proposed role for Aether in explaining gravitation gradually lost its supporters. In the late eighteenth century, however, Aether acquired a new lease on life through the science of optics. Thomas Young and Augustin Fresnel championed the wave theory of light, but the theory required a medium for the transmission of light waves. Aether was proposed by some as a possible candidate. This brings us to Hegel's day. We can see that Aether was a "live option" for scientists at the time, and indeed well into the nineteenth century.¹⁰²

101. Vondung, 139.

102. In the mid to late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the idea of Aether was dealt some severe blows. In 1864 J. Clerk Maxwell criticized the literalistic application of terms such as "elasticity" to the Aether (a practice common to both Hegel and mainstream scientists).

Herder, who was deeply immersed in the Hermetic tradition, took up Newton's esoteric Aether theory in its entirety and incorporated it into his own Hermetic cosmology.¹⁰³ Aether also figured in Schelling's philosophy of nature, which was probably the most direct influence on Hegel's doctrine.

Oddly enough, given its status as a fifth element, Aether did not enter into alchemical speculation until the middle of the fourteenth century. John of Rupescissa's Consideration of the Fifth Essence may have been the first alchemical text to popularize the idea that there are five elements.¹⁰⁴ In alchemy, Aether is frequently referred to as the quintessence. Marsillio Ficino identified spiritus with the fifth element in his magical theory. In magic, the "astral plane" on which spirits are encountered and on which the magician can travel is also call aetherial. Magic itself is often conceived as a manipulation of the Aether.¹⁰⁵ Mesmer--whose theoretical work on animal magnetism is alchemico-hermetic in character--tried to understand magnetic relationships in terms of the

As a result of Clerk Maxwell's work, Aether came to be understood as an energy field in which material objects come to be as "singularities." Ironically--considering how educated scientists normally view Hegel--this revision in the Aether theory actually looks like a move toward Hegel's speculative conception of Aether! Early in the twentieth century Einstein, in the thick of his positivist phase, declared the Aether to be an empty posit. The theory has never recovered.

103. See Vondung, 138-39.

104. Dan Merkur, Gnosis: An Esoteric Tradition of Mystical Visions and Unions (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 74.

105. Ibid., 72.

microcosm-macrocosm distinction and the Aether. Petry writes that "by this means [he] brought motion, action, ebb and flow, the properties of matter, polarity, inclination, reflection etc. etc. within the scope of his generalized consideration of 'animal magnetism' itself. This aspect of his theorizing was still being taken seriously while Hegel was lecturing at Heidelberg and Berlin . . . and made a scientific assessment of the true value of his discovery somewhat difficult."¹⁰⁶

It seems likely that in his treatment of the Aether, Hegel was drawing inspiration, in roughly equal portions, from both "hard science" and magico-alchemico-hermetic speculation. There is a suspiciously close fit between the Hermetic magus as aetherial voyager or operator and Hegel's conception of the philosopher who, from the standpoint of Absolute Knowing, moves within the plane of Logic and brings the Aether to full actualization in self-thinking thought. Furthermore, since Hegel says that the Aether is not the living God but only the "Idea of God,"¹⁰⁷ it must be inferred that in the transformation effected by Spirit at its highest level--its realization of the "speaking of the Aether with itself"¹⁰⁸--it has created God, using the Aether as a medium. This is indeed High Magic!

106. Petry, Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit, Vol. 2, 546-47.

107. Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 7, 188, 10-13.

108. Ibid., Vol. 4, 463, 17-464, 31.

5. Hegel and Alchemy

Aether plus the four elements does not entirely sum up Hegel's connections to alchemy. I have already had occasion to mention alchemical elements, terminology, or parallels in Hegel a number of times in previous chapters. In the last chapter I mentioned Hegel's use of the alchemical phrase caput mortuum in the Encyclopedia Logic. This puts in another appearance in the Philosophy of Nature (PN § 359; Petry III, 143). Elsewhere, Hegel employs the microcosm-macrocosm distinction, referring to the animal organism as the microcosm (der Mikrokosmos): "Within it, the whole of inorganic nature has recapitulated itself . . . " (PN § 352, Z; Petry III, 108).¹⁰⁹

In an 1808 letter to Karl Ludwig von Knebel (a well-known Mason), Hegel employs fanciful alchemical imagery: "If this age is on the whole an age of iron, here it is still mixed with lead, nickel, and other base metals. Things are indeed always being reorganized to produce a nugget of gold as well. It is characteristic of gold, however, to grow all too slowly, and with all our sprinkling and greenhouse exertions no steady growth ensues."¹¹⁰ It was believed by alchemists that metals contained a "seed of gold" which could be made to "sprout"

109. The microcosm-macrocosm distinction is not, of course, original to alchemy, but it is very closely associated with it.

110. Butler, 147; Hoffmeister #131. Hegel is also, of course, playing on Hesiod's ages of Gold and Iron.

by certain chemical procedures.¹¹¹ The result would be that an inferior metal would "grow into" gold.¹¹² Hegel is drawing on that idea here, and using it as a figurative way of talking about his theory of the "cunning of reason" (List der Vernunft): bad or mediocre times or situations have a bright side, in that they are merely a vehicle, a "negative moment" through which something positive or better comes to be actualized. We are powerless, however, to force along a transformation in the fortunes of the world. Hegel's "cunning of reason" is his version of Divine Providence, over which mere mortals have no control. All "our sprinkling and greenhouse exertions" are in vain, for gold grows slowly. This example is sufficient to illustrate that Hegel was conversant with the basic ideas of alchemy, and that those ideas were a part of the "furniture" of his mind, which came to him quite naturally as a way of expressing his ideas, whether in a treatise such as the Logic ("Caput mortuum") or in a casual letter to a friend.¹¹³

In Chapter Two I discussed Goethe's interest in alchemy in order to argue that alchemy was still very much

111. This concept is present in Eckhart: "The meaning of all corn is wheat, and of all metals gold, and of all births that of man." Schriften, "Von der Erfüllung" (Sermon on Luke 1:36), ed. H. Büttner (Jena, 1934), 37.

112. The metals in alchemy were ranked as follows, in order of increasing perfection: lead, tin, iron, copper, quicksilver, silver, and gold.

113. Hegel made von Knebel's acquaintance in Jena. He was a member of Goethe's circle.

a part of the intellectual scene in Europe, but particularly in Germany. The articles on "alchemy" and "alchemist" in Diderot's Encyclopédie (1746-59) were predominantly positive. In 1787, the Berlin Academy investigated the claims of a professor at Halle to have transmuted lead into Gold.¹¹⁴ Alchemy continued to be a part of life--although never quite a mundane part--in Germany until well into the nineteenth century. E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776-1822) in his short story "The Sandman" (Der Sandmann) (1816) has one character remark quite matter-of-factly to another, in an attempt to explain a strange occurrence that the latter had witnessed as a child, that it "was probably nothing other than secret alchemical experiments."¹¹⁵ Charles Webster writes of Hegel's time that "There persisted a strong sense of the possibility that embedded in the accretions of alchemical literature lay important truths expressed in symbolic form."¹¹⁶ Thus it is not surprising that alchemy would capture the imaginations of men like Oetinger, Goethe, Schelling, Steffens, Hegel, and others.

So far I have not presented a systematic account of alchemical doctrine. The most interesting connection

114. Ronald Gray, Goethe the Alchemist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 3.

115. Tales of E.T.A. Hoffmann, ed. and trans. Leonard J. Kent and Elizabeth C. Knight (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 101.

116. Charles Webster, From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 10.

between Hegel and alchemy does not consist in his explicit references to alchemical terms or doctrine, but in the parallelism between his philosophical project and the alchemical opus. Seeing this parallelism requires reading alchemical doctrines as symbolic expressions of an esoteric philosophy. Taking alchemical language as figurative has been popularized by C.G. Jung. However, Jung's approach is to treat alchemy as an unconscious expression of something that actually goes on in the psyche of the "alchemist." My approach is closer to that of Julius Evola, who regards alchemical works as deliberate instances of esoteric writing. It is significant that this latter kind of reading is actually encouraged by some alchemists, as I shall show. In order to see the esoteric meaning of alchemy, and see its parallelism to Hegel, we must take a look at its exoteric shell, and so what follows is a brief overview of traditional alchemical doctrine.

Alchemy is often referred to simply as hermeticism, or as the "hermetic art" (Evola titles his book on Alchemy The Hermetic Tradition, La tradizione ermetica).¹¹⁷ Alchemists prided themselves on being called "hermeticists." Like the Emerald Tablet, many alchemical texts were attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. Indeed, Alchemy appears to have come to conceptual fruition contemporaneously with the

117. Elias Ashmole (1617-92), an Englishman and one of the founders of the Royal Society, referred to alchemists as "lovers of wisdom," i.e., philosophers.

Hermetica. Bolos of Mendes in the second century B.C. is generally named as the first alchemist, i.e. the first to write of a science of alchemy that had spiritual overtones and did not look simply like metallurgy. The twenty-eight books of the alchemist Zosimos of Panopolis (late third or early fourth century A.D.) have been preserved. Other early names in the history of alchemy include Synesius (fourth century), Olympiodorus (sixth century) and Stephanos of Alexandria (seventh century).

David Walsh, drawing on the work of Mircea Eliade, argues that alchemy developed out of the metallurgical myths of the Iron Age, as well as the Egyptian skilled crafts.¹¹⁸ It was believed by ancient miners that metals were generated by a living Earth Spirit, a conception not unlike Hegel's Natural or Earth Soul.¹¹⁹ The ancient smiths believed that they played a role in the "gestation" of metals in the earth. Similarly, the alchemist believed it was his task to bring metals to their natural perfection: gold. The aim here was not the production of wealth, but the knowledge and perfection of nature. A perennial Hermetic theme, as we have seen, is the idea that the purpose of human existence is to "complete" or perfect the cosmos (or even God). The means for the perfection of

118. David Walsh, The Esoteric Origins of Modern Ideological Thought: Böhme and Hegel (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1978), 44-6.

119. See C.G. Jung's discussion of Basilus Valentinus on the Earth-Spirit in Psychology and Alchemy, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 342-43.

nature is, according to most alchemists, the distillation of the Philosopher's Stone. Just what exactly was the Philosopher's Stone? Also termed "the Essence," "the Stone of the Wise," "the Magisterium," "Magnum Opus," "the Quintessence," and the "universal Essence,"¹²⁰ descriptions of the stone vary:

It is described as being of various colours, sometimes as a red, white, or black powder, or it may be yellow, blue, or green. Raymond Lully calls it "carbunculus," while Paracelsus declares it to be a solid body like a ruby, transparent and flexible. Beregard says it is "the colour of a wild poppy, with the smell of heated sea-salt," and van Helmont describes it as being "yellow, the colour of saffron, in the form of a heavy powder, with a brilliancy like glass." Helvetius likewise describes it as being yellow and the colour of sulphur, but it is most frequently referred to as the red or white stone.¹²¹

The Philosopher's Stone was thought to be at one and the same time priceless and as common as dung.¹²² Emma Jung writes that the philosopher's stone is "a particle of God

120. C.J.S. Thompson, The Lure and Romance of Alchemy (New York: Bell Publishing, 1990), 69.

121. Ibid., 71.

122. Emma Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz, The Grail Legend, trans. Andrea Dykes (Boston: Sigo Press, 1986), 153.

concealed in nature, an analogy to the God who, in Christ, came down to earth in a human body, subject to suffering. On the other hand, the 'cheapness' of the stone . . . alludes to the fact that every human being is its potential bearer, even its begetter."¹²³

Descriptions of the function of the philosopher's stone vary as well. By it, claims one anonymous alchemical author, "all infirmities might be cured, human life prolonged to its utmost limits, and mankind preserved in health and strength of body and mind, clearness and vigour."¹²⁴ This seems to make the stone identical to the fabled "elixir of life," but it was generally conceived as much more than this. The stone was also held to be capable of isolating the literal essence of any object it was exposed to, and of transmuting substances one into another.

The philosopher's stone was supposed to possess the characteristics of both sulphur and mercury, which were thought by alchemists to be the dual materia prima of all things. The four elements of earth, air, fire and water--which are the ground of the active qualities of dry, cold, heat, and wet--are often thought to proceed from the Aether, the materia prima in its first or most pristine form. These elements make up all of physical reality, and each "contains" all the others (as represented in the theory that each can change into the others through an

¹²³. Ibid., 157.

¹²⁴. Quoted in Thompson, 70.

alteration in the degrees or balance of dry, cold, heat and wet). Heat is conceived as the most basic of the qualities, and fire the most basic of the elements.

This theory of the elements and their relationships constitutes the basic "theory of matter" in alchemy. There is more however, and it is intimately bound up with the perennial Hermetic theory of the correspondence of the macrocosm and the microcosm. As the Emerald Tablet puts it: "In truth certainly and without doubt, whatever is below is like that which is above, and whatever is above is like that which is below, to accomplish the miracles of one thing." In alchemy, the metals (formed through the interaction of the elements) are related to the planets (we have already encountered Hegel referring to this doctrine in connection with Schelling and Steffens). As David Walsh explains it, "The seven planets are ordered in the tension between the two poles of the active and spiritual powers of the sun, gold, and the passive receptive powers of the moon, silver. They are all represented by variations on the three basic symbols . . . for the sun, for the moon, and for the cross [representing] the elements. The only planet that contains all three [of the symbols] is Mercury, which signifies the predominance of the passive lunar power over the solarian formation of the four elements."¹²⁵

125. Walsh, Böhme and Hegel, 49.

Mercury, as the intersection of the physical elements and the Active and Passive forces, represents the isolation of materia prima, the Aether lying at the basis of all forms. It is conceived as the androgyne. As we have seen, the Philosopher's Stone is the unity of sulphur and mercury, a dual materia prima. We can see, then, that the Philosopher's Stone is something like a corporealization or "solidification" of the Aether, which is "decomposable" into the twin properties of sulphur and mercury. In fact, the Philosopher's Stone was sometimes referred to as the lapis aethereus.¹²⁶ The alchemical operation which achieves this is often represented by two serpents coiling together around a rod (symbolizing, perhaps, the Aether). This image is, of course, the cadeucus, the staff of Hermes or Mercury.¹²⁷ The Philosopher's Stone is also sometimes symbolized by the "Ouroborus," a snake biting its tail--symbol of the hen to pan or hen kai pan.

Paracelsus modified the sulphur-mercury doctrine by adding salt as a third principle.¹²⁸ For post-Paracelsian alchemy, the three principles were said to possess the following characters or attributions:¹²⁹

126. Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, 243.

127. Interestingly, according to H.S. Harris Hegel took Hermes or Mercury to be the image of the philosopher. Harris, Night Thoughts, 546.

128. Allison Coudert, Alchemy: The Philosopher's Stone (London: Wildwood House, 1980), 23.

129. Adapted from Ibid.

<u>Mercury</u>	<u>Sulphur</u>	<u>Salt</u>
metallicity	inflammability	uninflam- mability
volatility	volatility	fixidity
unchanged in fire	changed in fire	found in ashes
spirit	soul	body
water	air	earth

Paracelsus identified these three with the persons of the Trinity.¹³⁰ The philosopher's stone was conceived as the union of the three: in effect, God. Mercury was identified with the Holy Spirit. Paracelsus writes that "in this manner, in three things, all has been created . . . namely, in salt, in sulphur, and in liquid. In these three things all things are contained, whether sensate or insensate. . . . So too you understand that in the same manner that man is created [in the image of the triune God], so too all

130. The Book of the Holy Trinity (Das Buch von der heiligen Dreifaltigkeit), written in Constance between 1415 and 1419, anticipated Paracelsus in several key respects. Andrew Weeks writes that it "anticipates Paracelsus's extension of an earlier metallurgical dyad of mercury and sulphur to his triad of sulphur, mercury, and salt. The work also anticipates the theological import of this extension; for, like Paracelsus, the Book of the Holy Trinity endeavors to synthesize the tenets of alchemy, astrology, and meteorology with those of theology, coordinating in parallel patterns alchemistic references, with a mystically understood 'medicine'" (Andrew Weeks, Paracelsus: Speculative Theory and the Crisis of the Early Reformation [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997], 58).

creatures are created in the number of the Trinity, in the number three."¹³¹

The stages of the alchemical opus--the creation of the Philosopher's Stone--were usually given as three, but sometimes as four. First comes the nigredo, or black stage. This is the caput mortuum, in which the substance with which the alchemist begins is burned or cooked until it is reduced to a dark powder. Then comes the albedo, or white stage, in which the material is further purified. Third is citrinatis, the yellow stage, and fourth is rubedo, the red stage. It is impossible to describe these processes in detail, for in alchemical texts they are cloaked in layer upon layer of allegory and image, and the texts differ widely. Around the fifteenth or sixteenth century, the yellow stage was dropped and thereafter we meet almost always with only the black, white and red stages, the red symbolizing the Philosopher's Stone. Jung notes that there is a vacillation and tension in alchemy between the numbers three and four: "In alchemy there are three as well as four regimina or procedures, three as well as four colors. There are always four elements, often three of them are grouped together, with the fourth in a special position--sometimes earth, sometimes fire. Mercurius is of course quadratus but he is also a three-

131. Paracelsus, Sämtliche Werke, Vol. 2, Theologische und religionsphilosophische Schriften, ed. Kurt Goldammer. (Wiesbaden (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1955), 63.

headed snake or simply a triune. This uncertainty has a duplex character--in other words, the central ideas are ternary as well as quaternary."¹³²

Although most of the details regarding the stages of the alchemical opus are unclear, the initial stage is well-understood: it involves a principle of putrefaction or death. As Evola puts it, in order for the "new life" of the Philosopher's Stone to come to be, "it is the unanimous opinion of all the hermetic philosophers that a 'mortification' must intervene."¹³³ Ronald Gray writes that "It was for long believed that in order for growth to take place in an organism, that organism must first die."¹³⁴ In short, negation or cancellation is a necessary moment in the emergence of the Stone, and life itself is conceived as a perpetual dynamic involving affirmation and negation, yes and no.

The most famous German representative of the alchemical teaching was, of course, Paracelsus. In Paracelsus's lifetime only sixteen writings appeared under his name, yet his influence was immense. The major work of his maturity, Astronomia Magna oder die Ganze Philosophia Sagus der Grossen und Kleinen Welt, appeared in 1537-38. No less a figure than Erasmus of Rotterdam was one of Paracelsus's admirers. A letter from Erasmus to

¹³². Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, 26

¹³³. Julius Evola, The Hermetic Tradition, trans. E.E. Rehmus (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1995), 72.

¹³⁴. Gray, 12-13.

Paracelsus, thanking him for medical advice, is still extant: "I recognize the deep truth of your mysterious words," Erasmus writes, "not by any knowledge of medicine, which I have never studied, but by my simple feeling . . ."¹³⁵

David Walsh writes that Paracelsus "greatly expanded the significance of the principles of Alchemy, from a limited psycho-material technique to the illuminative center for an understanding of nature as a whole, by integrating them with the dominant Hermetic-Neoplatonic philosophy."¹³⁶

Paracelsus held the traditional Christian view that the world was created by God for man, to be known and manipulated. Man is at the center of Paracelsus's cosmos. Man is the quinta essentia who contains the spirits or essences of all other things. Thus, man, as the microcosm, can achieve knowledge of the whole by looking within himself. Paracelsus, then, in true Hermetic fashion, identifies self-knowledge and knowledge of the world: to know nature is to know it in terms of the being which is its telos, man. Man is not, however, merely a passive product of nature or God's will, for Paracelsus holds that God created the world in an imperfect state. It is man's role in the scheme of things to bring the world to

135. Quoted in Jolande Jacobi, Paracelsus: Selected Writings, trans. Norbert Guterman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), lii-liii.

136. Walsh, Böhme and Hegel, 54.

perfection. One interpreter of Paracelsus has put it this way: "The created world has been given over to man in order that he may fulfill it. More than that: man's original and specific mission is to lead it to perfection: he has been placed in the world solely for this purpose."¹³⁷ This is, of course, part and parcel of the "man as magus" thesis which we find in such figures as Ficino and Pico. The view even has scriptural authority: Saint Paul (in Romans 8.19-22) suggests that with Adam nature fell as well, but that it can be regenerated by us. For Paracelsus, man has been "excreted" from the world as its saviour, like a healing tincture drawn out from an herb.¹³⁸ Not surprisingly, Paracelsus held an organic view of the created world, like Eckhart and Cusa and the hermeticists: everything is related to everything else in one organic whole ordered by God. He frequently employed the Hermetic microcosm-macrocosm principle.¹³⁹ Andrew Weeks has written that the microcosm-macrocosm correlation is a staple of German mysticism "from Hildegard on": "German mysticism is preoccupied with large and small 'worlds,' ranging from the

137. Jacobi, xlvi.

138. Heinrich Schipperges, "Paracelsus and his Followers," in Faivre and Needleman, 156.

139. "As far as Paracelsus was concerned, man and the cosmos were analogues which were inseparably linked. The study of man the microcosm was unthinkable without an appreciation of his place in the physical and spiritual macrocosm" (Webster, 4).

absolute world of divinity to the microworlds encompassed by the smallest organism, space, or discrete thing."¹⁴⁰

The two theses of man's role as "perfecter" of nature, and of the interrelatedness of all things, are the twin pillars of Paracelsus's philosophy and his medical theory. Medicine is the chief science for Paracelsus (a position later maintained by Schelling), as it deals with the righting of imbalances in nature, and thus with nature's improvement. Medical practice is, in turn, based upon the organic view of creation, for Paracelsus's medicine depends upon the standard Hermetic theory of correspondences and occult sympathies. Symptoms of disease are "signatures" of imbalances or disharmonies in nature. The practitioner of the medical art is supposed to correct the imbalance and restore harmony.¹⁴¹

In keeping with others in the Hermetic tradition, Paracelsus held that behind the visible world lies an invisible world of spirits or "astral" or "aetherial" bodies. What unites all the different levels of reality is the will moved by imagination, through which God generates the astral bodies, "images" of the Ideas in the divine mind. The astral bodies in turn produce earthly bodies as images of themselves, and they communicate their influences to earthly things, producing health or disease. Paracelsus

140. Weeks, German Mysticism, 9.

141. Lewis White Beck, Early German Philosophy (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1969), 144.

reinterpreted the traditional alchemical concept of materia prima to identify it with the logos become bodily, holding within it the "seeds" for everything else (the influence of the Stoics on Paracelsus's doctrine is clear).

In Septem Defensiones (Seven Defenses), Paracelsus analyzes the origin of disease into five entia or causes: ens astrale, ens venale, ens naturale, ens spiritale, and ens deale. Heinrich Schipperges writes: "These five entia confront us with no less than the closed circle of human life with all its crises, and thus with the anthropological conception of an all-embracing order and way of life in days of health as well as days of sickness."¹⁴²

Ens venale, "toxic situation," refers to the mystery of nature that is poison. Everything, Paracelsus claims, is poison, if it is present in certain quantities. The proportion determines what is poisonous and what is not. Thus, Paracelsus holds, poison is an integral part of nature. According to him, it is the task of the alchemist to distinguish in practice what is poisonous from what is not. Paracelsus's treatment of alchemy makes it seem more or less indistinguishable from his theory of medicine: alchemy has as its task the chemical perfection of nature.¹⁴³ Paracelsus holds an "alchemical" view of the structure of the universe, claiming that everything was created by God in a "chemical" manner and must be perfected

142. Schipperges, 157.

143. Ibid., 159.

"chemically."¹⁴⁴ Ens venale can be seen as a first step, consummated with Böhme and Hegel, toward an account of creation that makes room for the negative. Paracelsus's conception of alchemy as a healing art, and his triad of salt-sulphur-mercury found their way into Böhme's writings, along with many other Paracelsian concepts.

It has long been debated just how immersed Paracelsus was in the literature and practice of what traditionally goes under the name of alchemy.¹⁴⁵ We do know that Paracelsus was supposed to have been taught alchemy by Solomon Trismosin (whom he met in Constantinople in 1520), who himself learned alchemy (and possibly Kabbalah) from a Jew.¹⁴⁶ Paracelsus, not generally given to modesty, was not shy about claiming to have discovered the philosopher's stone.¹⁴⁷

Statements in Hegel's Philosophy of Nature certainly indicate that Hegel was familiar with Paracelsus's doctrines.¹⁴⁸ In fact, as H.S. Harris has shown, Hegel was quite attached to Paracelsianism. In Hegel's lectures of 1803 the division "metals-combustibles-neutrals-earths" is

144. See Weeks, Paracelsus, 152-53.

145. His knowledge of Kabbalah is even more debatable. J.L. Blau has written that "while the word 'cabala' is used by Paracelsus, he had no conception whatsoever of its meaning." See Joseph Leon Blau, The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 85.

146. Raphael Patai, The Jewish Alchemists (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 268-70.

147. Ibid., 29.

148. See in particular paragraphs 280 and 316; Petry II, 32; 117.

connected with Paracelsus's distinction "mercury-sulphur-salt."¹⁴⁹ In the Jena period, Hegel sometimes did not refer to Paracelsus by name, but instead employed the rubric "the elders," which Harris has argued refers to both Paracelsus and Böhme.¹⁵⁰ Most interesting of all, however, is the fact that even where Hegel is drawing from more recent sources he insists, as Harris puts it, "on finding an earlier pedigree . . . in Paracelsus and Böhme."¹⁵¹

In the mature Philosophy of Nature, just before beginning his discussion of the four elements, Hegel says

It is a matter of history that Paracelsus said that all terrestrial bodies are composed of the four elements of mercury, sulphur, salt, and virgin earth [jungfräulichen Erde],¹⁵² and that these correspond to the four cardinal virtues. Mercury is metalline, and as metal is abstract matter; it is self-identical in its fluid corporeality, and corresponds to light. Sulphur is rigidity, the possibility of combustion; fire is not alien to it, but constitutes its self-consuming actuality. Salt corresponds to water, which is the cometary principle, and its dissolution

149. Harris, Night Thoughts, 274; 278-79; Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 6, 114, 4-17.

150. "Paracelsus and Böhme together are the 'elders'--i.e., the alchemists" (Harris, Night Thoughts, 274n).

151. Ibid., 278.

152. Recall Goethe's experiments with "virgin earth" (see Chapter Two).

constitutes indifferent reality, or the subsidence of fire into independence. Finally, virgin earth is the simple innoxiousness of this movement, the subject which constitutes the extinction of these moments; this was the accepted expression for the abstract earthiness of pure silica.¹⁵³

Against the charge that the theory is absurd because these components are obviously not to be found in all things, Hegel says "The essential point of such assertions [as Paracelsus's] is however that there are four moments to real corporeality, not that these materials are really present. Such theories should not be taken literally, for if they are, Jacob Böhme and others may well be thought of as nonsensical and lacking in experience" (PN § 280, Z; Petry II, 32). In short, Hegel is concerned--again--to defend Paracelsus and his follower, Böhme: if their work is not taken in a literal-minded way, it reveals important truths.

An even more interesting statement about Paracelsus and Böhme is to be found later in the text. Hegel writes that "According to an ancient and general opinion, each body consists of four elements. In more recent times, Paracelsus has regarded them as being composed of mercury

153. Harris points out that Hegel is mistaken in attributing the "virgin earth" doctrine to Paracelsus. It actually originates with Böhme. See Harris, Night Thoughts, 274n.

or fluidity, sulphur or oil, and salt, which Jacob Böhme called the great triad." Again Hegel points out that such ideas are easy to refute if taken literally, but "It should not be overlooked . . . that in their essence they contain and express the determinations of the Concept" (PN § 316; Petry II, 117). This is a striking remark, for here Hegel is saying that if the alchemical language of Paracelsus, Böhme, and others is considered in a non-literal way, its inner content is identical to his system (to the "determinations of the Concept").

Taking our cue from Hegel himself, then, it should be obvious that many of the alchemical terms and conceptions I have been discussing have a dual significance. On the one hand, they are meant literally, as referring to actual substances. At the same time, however, they have a symbolic and mystical significance. This latter does not appear to have been a late development, but rather something accepted by many alchemists all along (the literal-minded laboratory alchemists seeking only to change lead into gold were derisively referred to by the genuine adepts as "puffers," in reference to their constant use of bellows). In the minds of the true alchemists, transmutation was not just something that happened in a vessel, but "a process which transformed the individual from an ordinary mortal immersed in the physical world to a superior being fully conscious of the mystery of life and

death."¹⁵⁴ The Philosopher's Stone was held to represent the hen kai pan, and the quest for the Stone the knowledge of all things, or of God.¹⁵⁵ The hermetic vessel in which the opus was to take place was supposed to be perfectly round, in imitation of the shape of the cosmos. It is possible, of course, that what was involved was a real chemical procedure, which was supposed to be "activated by" or "infused with" a concomitant psychic act, based in mystical notions. This dual physical and psychical nature of the alchemical opus is perhaps reflected in the recommendation by the author of the Liber Platonis quartorum that the skull be used as the vessel of transmutation.¹⁵⁶

If alchemy can be understood as a mystical doctrine, why then is it expressed in such unwieldy, often grotesque, physicalistic language? Julius Evola, writing of alchemy as it existed in Christian times, states that alchemists went "into hiding": "And the Royal Art [i.e., the art of acquiring the wisdom God] was presented as the alchemical art of transmuting base metals into gold and silver. By so doing it no longer fell under the suspicion of heresy, and even passed as one of the many forms of 'natural

154. Coudert, 96.

155. Gray, 20; 21.

156. This work was probably written in the tenth century. The text is Harranian (see Introduction on the Harranians), and exists in both Arabic and Latin versions. Jung notes that it is "of great importance for the history of alchemy." See Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, 267, 88.

philosophy' that did not interfere with the faith; even among the ranks of Catholics we can discern the enigmatic figures of hermetic masters, from Raymond Lully and Albertus Magnus to Abbot Pernety."¹⁵⁷

In the Opus Mago-Cabbalisticum of Georg von Welling (a work of uncertain date known to have been read by Goethe¹⁵⁸), it is said that "our intention is not directed towards teaching anyone how to make gold, but something much higher, namely how Nature may be seen and recognized as coming from God, and God in Nature."¹⁵⁹ Welling's alchemy was theosophy: his object was the knowledge of God, in Hegel's phrase, "as He is in His eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite Spirit," and of God's expression in nature. The Paracelcist Oswald Croll wrote that

[The alchemists] leave themselves, and totally go out from themselves. . . . They hasten from the imperfect to that which is one and perfect, the knowledge and contemplation whereof . . . is a sacred, Heavenly and hid silence, the quiet or Rest of the senses and all

157. Evola, xviii. Recall also, from Chapter One, Luther's approving remarks on alchemy. The German alchemist Heinrich Khunrath (1560-1601), a Christian Kabbalist and friend of John Dee, held the transmutation to be a process occurring within the soul of the alchemist. In China, where alchemy also flourished, the art had already become exclusively mystical and contemplative by the thirteenth century. See Coudert, Alchemy, 83, 91.

158. Gray, 4.

159. Quoted in Gray, 19.

things, . . . when at length . . . all minds . . . shall be altogether but one thing, in one MIND which is above every MIND. It is the intimate vision of God, which also hapneth by the Light of Grace to the separate Soul even in this world, if any man set himselfe about it now, and be subject to God. Thus many holy men by vertue of the Deifick Spirit have tasted the First fruits of the Resurrection in this life, and have had a foretaste of the Celestiall Country.¹⁶⁰

The German alchemist Gerhard Dorn (known for having said "transform yourselves into living philosophical stones!"¹⁶¹) claimed that alchemists possessed the secret of freeing Spirit from Matter.¹⁶² Jung writes that "For the alchemist, the one primarily in need of redemption is not man, but the deity who is lost and sleeping in matter."¹⁶³ Jung contrasts alchemy with traditional Christianity in that the latter holds that man is redeemed, whereas the former casts man as the redeemer: "man takes upon himself the duty of carrying out the redeeming opus, and attributes the state of suffering and consequent need

160. Oswald Croll, Philosophy Reformed and Improved. . . . The Mysteries of Nature by . . . Osw. Crollius, trans. H. Pinnell (London, 1657), 214.

161. "Transmutemini in vivos lapides philosophicos!" Quoted in Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, 148.

162. Quoted in Ibid., 269.

163. Ibid., 312.

of redemption to the anima mundi imprisoned in matter."¹⁶⁴
It is the task of the alchemist to help spirit to free
itself from the bonds of the natural.

An eighteenth-century manuscript--De summa et
universalis medicinae sapientiae veterum philosophorum--
depicts a crucible in which Spirit, represented as a dove
(a traditional Christian symbol) rises out of nature,
represented by the four elements (see figure 19). Recall
Hegel's "Boehme myth" of 1804-05 (see Chapter Four): "The
consumed nature rises up in a newer, more ideal form, like
a realm of shadows which has lost its first life, the
appearance of its spirit after the death of its life. But
this new form [Spirit] is the overcoming of the evil, the
enduring of the glowing fire [Glut] of pain in the center
point, where as purified it leaves all the flakes behind in
the crucible [Tiegel], a residuum, which is the pure
nothing. It raises itself up as a freer spirit, which sees
its radiance only in nature."¹⁶⁵

A drawing accompanying a work by Robert Fludd (figure
20) depicts a jagged beam of energy projected from the
Godhead, issuing in a dove and circling back again to God,
representing the "completion" of God in Holy Spirit. The
alchemical opus was often called circulare (circular), or
represented as the rota, the wheel (see Chapter Five on
Böhme's wheel). It was thought that the end of the opus

164. Ibid., 306.

165. Ibid.

returns to the beginning. As noted earlier, the Philosopher's Stone is simply a transformation of prima materia; the beginning is preserved in the end, but in a higher form; the Spirit hidden in prima materia is freed.¹⁶⁶ The stone was "alpha and omega," and the opus itself represented by the ouroboros, about which I have already had occasion to comment (see above and Chapters Two and Three). Given the obscurity of the texts in question, there is no way to decide if the alchemical opus is intended to be entirely figurative or symbolic, or if there is both a literal, physical operation of some sort coupled with a mystical doctrine. Nevertheless, in some sense the alchemists believed that what they were doing involved the salvation of nature and/or the "completion" of God.

The alchemical opus captured Hegel's imagination, as it did the imaginations of Goethe, Schelling, Steffens, and others. A systematic parallel can be drawn between each aspect of the opus and Hegel's philosophical project. As I have already noted, in alchemy each metal was said to contain a "seed of gold" which could be made to sprout and blossom. At the same time, the alchemist was expected to purify himself, or the process would not work. In this we can see an analogy to the function of the Phenomenology itself. I have described it earlier as a "purification."

166. See Ibid., 345. The Spirit in prima materia is explicitly identified by some alchemists with the Holy Spirit of the Christian Trinity.

In the phenomenological crucible, Spirit is separated from its impurities and, literally, perfected. As we have seen, the "seed" of Absolute Spirit is present in every flawed, imperfect form that Spirit takes. The work of this purification has happened, in part, through the historical process. But Hegel provides the final, secret ingredient necessary to synthesize Absolute Spirit. As I said in Chapter Four, he has placed the historical forms of Spirit into his alembic and, through the fire of dialectic, has caused them to re-organize into a form which reveals the necessity within their apparent contingency. The Phenomenology is the nigredo, the stage in which the material (man) has its imperfections burned off. In Hegel the albedo, the pure white stone from which the Philosopher's Stone can be made, is Absolute Knowing, the pure state of aetherial consciousness from which the entire system develops.

As Ronald Gray writes of the alchemical process, "These very inferior metals . . . were to be transmuted in the alchemical work into a God-like form."¹⁶⁷ Hegel has utilized the dark will of Desire--and the blinkered perspectives of myriad forms of Desire sublimated as modes of consciousness--in order to produce not a "God-like form," but God Himself. Hegel's "magical power that converts [the negative] into being" is beyond the dreams of

¹⁶⁷. Gray, 25.

Agrippa, Paracelsus, or even Goethe's Faust. Hegel is the World-Historical Alchemist. His product is the Philosopher's Stone, the lapis aethereus or, as it was known to the Germans, der Stein der Weisen. The place of transformation is represented in the Phenomenology as Golgotha, the Place of the Skull (die Schädelstätte). As we have seen, the alchemical retort was sometimes a skull, and the caput mortuum was symbolized by a skull.

Hegel's "philosopher's stone" is a "transformation" of the prima materia, which is Aether: a "solidification" of the eternal Aether ("Objective Spirit"). Unlike the prima materia of traditional alchemy, though, it does not contain all things in potentia. Instead, all things are in actuality by being contained within it; it is "androgynous," a unity of opposites. Like the alchemists, Hegel's philosophical project is to free Spirit from Nature. Just as alchemists believe that God is slumbering in matter and must be released by man, so Hegel holds (as quoted earlier) that Nature is "petrified intelligence" but that "God does not remain petrified and moribund however, the stones cry out and lift themselves up to spirit." Like the alchemists, Hegel believes that nature has, in a sense, "excreted" man; that self-conscious man has arisen from nature, and has developed his potentialities through history. His aim is the "redemption" of the nature from which he has arisen. Hegel believes that it is in

philosophical thought that God and the world are "completed," exactly as "the elders" believed that man was the redeemer who must "save" nature and God.

Hegel's "stone," like Paracelsus's, is triadic. Hegel himself has claimed that the three materials of mercury, sulphur and salt represent the three moments of the Concept (see above). Just as each stage of the alchemical opus dies to the next, so each moment of the dialectic is negated and is superceded by another: each moment contains the "seed" of the Absolute, which blossoms in the end. Just as Paracelsus holds that poison is a part of all things, so Hegel's account of the whole finds a place for and utilizes the negative (to repeat, Hegel's dialectic is a "magical power that converts [the negative] into being"). The dialectic is, of course, a circle. Idea issues in nature, which issues in Spirit, and Spirit returns to Idea in the form of Absolute Spirit or philosophical thought. This is identical to the alchemical representation discussed earlier which has the dove of Spirit emerging from a God-created Nature, and circling back to God.

Hegel adopts the triadic preoccupation of Paracelsus, but his thought exhibits a tension between triads and tetrads. I have already quoted Jung commenting on the tension in alchemy between three and four. Hegel identifies the mercury, sulphur and salt of Paracelsus with the three moments of the Concept, but as we have also seen

he conjoins Paracelsus's triad with the "virgin earth" and then states that the four represent the quadradicity of nature. Jung notes that sometimes three of the four elements are grouped together and the fourth separated off. This represents the tendency to regard three as the primary mystical number. In a similar fashion, Hegel argues in the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit that the five senses must be understood as three groups of senses, because the Concept has only three moments! (PS § 401, Z; Petry II, 167).

I have already discussed how alchemy seems to be either entirely allegorical--describing some mystical insight, rather than literal laboratory work--or a real physical science with a psychic ingredient or component. The psychic component--which itself involves a mystical philosophy--involves a change in the alchemist's soul concomitant with a change in the retort. Hegel can be seen as stripping off the psychic component of alchemy and making it autonomous. He has preserved the alchemists' aim of "perfecting" nature and "completing" God, but he has given it a "transcendental turn." Now the alchemical opus will take place entirely in the soul of man. God will achieve completion through man's self-reflection.

Although the ultimate consummation of reality takes place in Absolute Spirit, this level is preceded, however, by Objective Spirit.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

"THE ROSE IN THE CROSS OF THE PRESENT": HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF OBJECTIVE AND ABSOLUTE SPIRIT

"Between Eternal Birth, Restoration from the Fall and the discovery of the Philosopher's Stone there is no difference."

---Jakob Böhme, De Signatura Rerum¹

1. Spirit In All Its Glory

In this chapter I shall be concerned with Hegel's treatment of Objective Spirit, Absolute Spirit (Art, Religion, and Philosophy), and world history. Obviously, the breadth of the chapter precludes my going into great depth in treating the relevant texts. In this opening section, I shall simply sketch out a very rough road map of the territory we will be covering. My intention is that our tour of the higher regions of Spirit, while brief and restricted only to the most important landmarks, will be one which feels more like a discovery of a new locale, than a return visit to familiar terrain.

In Hegel's system every aspect of Spirit above Subjective Spirit constitutes a world created by man. Culture, ethical life, religion, art, and philosophy constitute a man-made world which stands in opposition to the merely natural. In the Lectures on the Philosophy of

1. Böhme, De Signatura Rerum, Ch. 7, Para. 78.

World History, Hegel states that "After the creation of the natural universe, man appears on the scene as the antithesis of nature; he is the being who raises himself up into a second world" (Nisbet, 44; VIG, 50). Objective Spirit is the Absolute Idea as embodied in human social institutions. Absolute Spirit is the highest form in which the Idea realizes itself, for its three forms involve human beings deliberately striving to confront the Idea. In Objective Spirit, we confront the Idea in the form of Ethical Life (Sittlichkeit), but here the Idea is not in its pure element. In art we strive to represent the Idea. In religion we strive for at-onement with the Idea, which is again approached in representational or imagistic form. In philosophy, we at-one ourselves with the Idea through its own element of pure thought. The philosopher "returns" Idea to the pure aether of thought, while all the time remaining a being in the world. As is well known, Hegel regards philosophy as the highest form of Absolute Spirit; in it the self-thinking thought of Absolute Idea (or God) is finally realized in the world. However, contrary to what is often thought Hegel does not regard art and religion as in any way dead or disposable.

Hegel's account of Objective Spirit and of the pattern of world history involves the realization of human freedom. Hegel holds that in much of the world freedom is still unknown, and until Christianity came along it was entirely

unknown. Christianity revealed that all human beings possess an innate freedom and dignity. What Hegel has in mind by freedom is widely misunderstood, however. He is frequently thought to be endorsing the modern, liberal ideal of the autonomous agent.² Nothing could be further from Hegel's intent; Hegel is no individualist. In fact, Hegel holds that individuals are free and moral only to the extent that they renounce their particularity and identify themselves with the Universal, as embodied in the Ethical Life of the State. In the section on Abstract Right (Das abstrakte Recht) in the Philosophy of Right, Hegel rejects the idea that freedom simply means freedom to choose whatever one wants.

To be sure, Hegel's language sometimes suggests that he is a liberal in the classical tradition. Hegel is, after all, the philosopher of synthesis par excellence, and so he is concerned to "sublate" classical liberal principles into his own account of right--although they are radically transformed in the process. He states in the Philosophy of World History, for example, that "the best state is that in which the greatest degree of freedom prevails" (Nisbet, 119; VIG, 142). This has led leftist commentators like Kojève to write that mankind can only be

2. Kenneth Westphal, "The Basic Context and Structure of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," in The Cambridge Companion to Hegel, ed. Frederick C. Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 244. Westphal states that Hegel upheld the liberal principle of "individual autonomy."

satisfied by the creation of a state "in which the strictly particular, personal, individual value of each is recognized as such . . . " ³ In Chapter Five I argued that the Absolute Idea is "free" insofar as it is not subsumed or constrained by any higher being or category. The Idea is the only genuinely free being, and so it follows that human beings may be free only by identifying themselves with the universal, with the Idea. For most individuals, this is possible only through the Idea's earthly manifestation as the State, as the objective, publicly-accepted moral order. This is hardly a celebration of individual autonomy!

As we have seen, the human being is characterized by the will to negate otherness and to see himself in all things. In the case of society and culture, human Desire must take a different form: an actual attempt to negate or remake the social world would be viewed by Hegel as an adolescent aberration (a point to which I shall return shortly). Instead, we make the social world our own by surrendering to it; we negate its otherness by submerging our identity in it, by acquiescing to the social and cultural world in which we find ourselves. In the Phenomenology Hegel writes that "In a free nation, Reason is in truth realized. It is a present living Spirit in

3. Alexandre Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 58.

which the individual not only finds his essential character, i.e. his universal and particular nature, expressed, and present to him in the form of thinghood, but is himself this essence, and also has realized that essential character. The wisest men of antiquity have therefore declared that wisdom and virtue consist in living in accordance with the customs of one's nation" (Miller, 214; PG, 236). As is well known, Hegel rejects Kantian morality because it provides us with only an empty rule, the Categorical Imperative, which we are supposed to use to test the "maxims" according to which we act. How we apply the rule is at root purely subjective. It is not enough to simply tack on another rule for applying the first rule; at some point we must get "back to the rough ground" of practical knowledge in order to know how to act morally. Such knowledge, Hegel argues, is available only in a social context.⁴

As I have said, the State, which embodies the customs or laws of a nation, constitutes an earthly "incarnation" of Absolute Idea. Hegel writes in the Philosophy of World

4. Kojève's, as well as Voegelin's, treatment of Hegel errs in paying too little attention to the Philosophy of Right. Kojève appropriates Hegel for Marxism and claims that his idealism consists in a human project of remaking the world according to the "ideal" (see Ibid.). As I shall demonstrate in section four, when I discuss the famous Preface to the Philosophy of Right, this is in fact the opposite of Hegel's position. Voegelin repeats Kojève's error, using it as ammunition against Hegel. See his essay "On Hegel: A Study in Sorcery," in The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Vol. 12, Published Essays, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990).

History that "No truly ethical existence is possible until individuals have become fully conscious of their ends. They must attain knowledge of the Unmoved Mover, as Aristotle calls it, of the unmoved motive force by which all individuals are activated" (Nisbet, 77; VIG, 91).⁵ Here again, Hegel is drawing on Aristotle's conception of God, this time to speak about the State. In the Philosophy of Right, Hegel remarks that "This substantial unity [the State] is an absolute unmoved end in itself" (PR § 258; Knox, 156). As we have seen, Hegel identifies his Unmoved Mover, the Absolute Idea, with God. He does not shrink from the logic of identifying the State, the Idea's embodiment on earth, with God as well. In the Philosophy of Right, he states that "The State is Spirit on earth and consciously realizing itself there. . . . The march of God in the world, that is what the state is. The basis of the state is the power of Reason actualizing itself as will." Hegel goes on to refer to the state as "this actual God" (diesen wirklichen Gott) (PR § 258, Z; Knox, 279).

Many interpreters of Hegel have resolutely refused to take Hegel at his word when he identifies the state with the "actual God." For instance, Kenneth Westphal writes that "When Hegel grandiloquently described the state as God

5. It may sound here as if Hegel is speaking about the World Spirit, but that is because in the passage quoted he is drawing a parallel between the relationship between individuals and the state, and nations and the world spirit.

standing in the world . . . his point was not to divinize the state."⁶ One wonders what Hegel's point could have been, then, in continually identifying the state with the Divinity. Westphal is not very helpful on this.

To be sure, the State is not the highest manifestation of God on earth; that occurs in the aetherial self-reflection of philosophy. Nevertheless, the State is a part or an aspect of the Divinity. Thus, in order for Spirit to reach its highest level it must become one with Absolute Idea first by bending the individual will to the will of the State. Hegel writes of the State that "this final end has supreme right against the individual, whose supreme duty is to be a member of the state" (PR § 258; Knox, 156). In the Philosophy of World History, Hegel states that "The state does not exist for the sake of the citizens; it might rather be said that the state is the end, and the citizens are its instruments" (Nisbet, 94-95; VIG, 112). Hegel adds that the State only exists through the individuals which are "moments" of its "organic life" (and thus the means-ends terminology is inadequate), but it is clear that he holds that the "emergent property" we call the State is morally and metaphysically "higher" than the individual.

The State is the third term of a famous Hegelian triad: family, civil society (bürgerliche Gesellschaft),

6. Westphal, 240.

State. These are the three moments of Ethical Life. The members of the family are united by love, but in order for the children to develop into individuals in their own right, they must pursue their own individual goals. The realm of civil society is the realm of such matured individuals who have left the nest, each with their own claims and projects, each "looking out for number one"; it is the realm of the marketplace. Civil society is the antithesis of the family because it is characterized by competition and divisiveness, rather than by love. A society consisting simply of families and the marketplace cannot be a stable one, however. Like Aristotle, Hegel holds that a good society is an organic unity. A good society cannot be one in which the only love or loyalty men feel is toward their own clan, with everyone outside the clan regarded merely as competition. Something must function to bring men of different clans together in a kind of super-family; something must serve to tie their interests together and create genuine fellow-feeling among all the citizens. This something, of course, is the State, which "sublates" family and civil society: the State, like civil society, is an association of autonomous individuals, but it cancels the external relation of individuals in civil society and, like the family, relates them internally through a shared foundation of values and interests. (The "sublation" of family and civil society in the State does

not mean, of course, that family and civil society cease to be.)

The details of Hegel's State cannot concern us here. Suffice it to say that it is a constitutional monarchy. It includes a parliament with two houses, a lower house composed of the business class, and an upper house made up of the landed gentry or agricultural class. As I will discuss in a later section, this is obviously not a portrait of the Prussian state, although Hegel is often accused of having given official, "philosophical" sanction to the Prussian State in his Philosophy of Right. Hegel's state is not identical to any government existing then or now. Instead, it is a pure ideal, like Aristotle's polity, to which actual states approximate. Nevertheless, Hegel's State is not a utopia. It was a thing of the present for Hegel because all of its different aspects had already been realized somewhere, in different nations. As I will discuss in section four, Hegel sees himself merely as giving expression to the "pure form" of the legitimate state, as it had revealed itself in his time. This is the only sense in which what Hegel expresses is an "ideal." Further, Hegel's identification of the State with God holds good even though his State had not been (and still has not been) fully realized in one place: insofar as states approximate to the ideal they participate in the divine.

As I have said, the highest level of Spirit is not revealed in the State but in Absolute Spirit: art, religion, and philosophy. Hegel believes that we can reach the level of Absolute Spirit only by first being members of a state which approximates--the closer the better--the ideal State. Specifically, wisdom is possible only to those living in a Christian state, in which man's nature as potentially rational and free (and divine) is recognized, if not always consistently respected.⁷ Kojève writes that "the only man who can be Wise is a citizen of the universal and homogeneous state . . ."⁸ Thus art, religion, and philosophy (in their highest forms) are possible only when the social conditions described by Hegel prevail.

There is a very special relationship between the State and religion, however. Hegel holds that the State must rest on religion (he does not maintain anything similar concerning art and philosophy). In Hegel's 1824 manuscript for the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, he writes that "The state must rest essentially on religion; the security of attitudes and duties vis-à-vis the state becomes for the first time absolute in religion" (LPR I, 200). The state, recall, is the consummation of Ethical Life: "The State is the actuality of the Ethical Idea" (PR § 257; Knox, 155). In this role, the State requires

7. The "Christian state" involves for Hegel Christian religion and culture, as we shall see.

8. Kojève, 95.

religion, for "Against every other mode of obligation one can supply excuses, exceptions, counter reasons" (LPR I, 200). In a passage reminiscent of Plato's Euthyphro (14b), Hegel remarks that "reverence for the God or gods secures and preserves individuals, families, states; contempt for God or gods dissolves rights and duties, the bond of families and states, and leads to their destruction" (LPR I, 200). Hegel goes on to say, however, that his argument for the establishment of religion is not simply pragmatic or prudential: religion is not simply a means. Hegel believes in God--in his own peculiar way--and therefore holds that religion is one of the highest activities of men, and thus an end in itself. In the Philosophy of Right, Hegel goes so far as to hold that the State should even require its citizens to belong to a church (though he leaves the choice of church to the individual; PR, 270; Knox, 168).

Laurence Dickey has argued that Hegel's conception of Sittlichkeit has been erroneously attributed to his nostalgia for the Greek polis and its Volksreligion. Instead, Dickey suggests that the real influence is the values of Old-Württemberg and its tradition of "Civil Piety." Dickey writes that, "The failure to appreciate the impulse toward 'Protestant civil piety' in the culture of Old-Württemberg lies behind much of the confusion over the

religious and political aspects of Hegel's thought."⁹

Dickey notes that religion's role in making men better "by improving the ethical quality of civil life" was strongly emphasized in the culture of Old-Württemberg. He writes, "Indeed, in Württemberg religion existed very much to reinforce politics; likewise, politics was very often seen as an extension of the individual's religious personality."¹⁰ In section three of this chapter, I will explore the connections between Hegel's philosophy of religion, right, and history and the culture of Württemberg.

Hegel's philosophy of religion is central to his thought. Karl Löwith writes that "For an understanding of Hegel's system, his philosophy of religion is even more important than his philosophy of the state. It is not just one component of the whole system, but its spiritual center of gravity."¹¹ As I have already discussed, Hegel's theology is essentially Böhmean in its developmental conception of God. The Logic represents God "in Himself." God expresses Himself through the forms of Nature, but only returns to Himself and achieves self-knowing through Spirit, through human knowing. The philosopher thus serves

9. Laurence Dickey, Hegel: Religion, Economics, and the Politics of Spirit 1770-1807 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 9.

10. Ibid., 8.

11. Karl Löwith, From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Thought, trans. David E. Green (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 47.

to "actualize" or "complete" God. Because God qua Absolute Idea (God in Himself) is conceived of as abstract and lacking realization in the world, it follows that God's progressive worldly incarnation involves a progressive increase in "concreteness" or "embodiment." In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion Hegel states that "Spirit is in the most concrete sense. The absolute or highest being belongs to it" (LPR I, 142). This aspect of Hegel's thought is strikingly similar to Oetinger's theory of Geistlichkeit, discussed in Chapter Two. In the Lectures, Hegel refers to God as "the absolute substance," but then goes on, just as in the Phenomenology, to identify substance with subject (LPR I, 370). What this means is simply that God becomes absolute substance as Spirit. Spirit is the "mystical body" of God on earth.¹²

In the Philosophy of Right Hegel states that "The content of religion is absolute truth, and consequently the religious is the most sublime of all dispositions" (Knox, PR § 270; 165-66). Speculative philosophy, Hegel insists, is not hostile to religious belief: "nothing is further from its intention than to overthrow religion, i.e., to assert that the content of religion cannot for itself be the truth." In other words, religion on its own, without the "assistance" of philosophy is absolute truth. Hegel states that "religion is precisely the true content but in

12. See Cyril O'Regan, The Heterodox Hegel (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 274-75.

the form of representation, and philosophy is not the first to offer the substantive truth. Humanity has not had to await philosophy in order to receive for the first time the consciousness or cognition of truth" (LPR I, 251).

Humanity, then, can receive the truth through religion alone, without the need for philosophy. "Religion is for everyone," Hegel claims, unlike philosophy which is for the few (LPR I, 180). Philosophy and religion have the same content (as we will see, Hegel explicitly identifies the moments of the Idea--Being, Essence, Concept--with the Holy Trinity). The fact that religion expresses truth in the form of representation does not lead Hegel, contrary to what is often claimed, to denigrate or reject it. Nevertheless, Hegel holds that in philosophy the truth is expressed in a more adequate form, the form of pure thought.

In Chapter Three I suggested that Hegel believed that the truth has always been an unconscious possession of mankind. At various times and in the person of various thinkers, it has expressed itself in different forms. The philosopher "recollects" this unconscious wisdom in a form that can fully, and finally, express it. This interpretation is supported by Hegel's remarks in the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion. Hegel refers to religions as "sprouting up fortuitously, like the flowers and creations of nature, as foreshadowings, images,

representations, without [our] knowing where they come from or where they are going to" (LPR I, 196; VPR I, 106).

Hegel states that "Religion is a begetting of the divine spirit, not an invention of human beings but an effect of the divine at work, of the divine productive process within humanity" (LPR I, 130; VPR I, 46).

Hegel does not, however, regard all religions as equally adequate expressions of eternal truth. As is well-known, he claims that Christianity is the "Absolute Religion" (e.g., LPR I, 112; VPR I, 29). Hegel states that "God has revealed Himself through the Christian religion; that is, he has granted mankind the possibility of recognizing his nature, so that he is no longer an impenetrable mystery" (Nisbet, 40; VIG, 45). Principally, Christianity has penetrated the mystery of God by revealing his nature as triune. Hegel takes issue with theologians and clergy who hold that mankind cannot know God, or who consider the attempt to know God as impious or hubristic. Hegel claims not only that such knowledge is possible, but that it is our highest duty to obtain it (Nisbet, 36; VIG, 40; also LPR I, 88). "God does not wish to have narrow-minded and empty-headed children," Hegel states (Nisbet 42; VIG, 47).

Knowing God is our highest duty because for Hegel God only fully comes into being in the community of worshippers. Hegel holds that "God's Spirit is essentially

in his community; God is Spirit only insofar as God is in his community" (LPR I, 164; VPR I, 74). And: "The concept of God is God's idea, [namely,] to become and make Himself objective to himself. This is contained in God as Spirit: God is essentially in His community and has a community; He is objective to Himself, and is such truly only in self-consciousness [so that] God's very own highest determination is self-consciousness." Beforehand, God is "incomplete," Hegel says (LPR I, 186-87; VPR I, 96). He refers to the community as the cultus. "In the cultus," Hegel writes, "the formal consciousness frees itself from the rest of its consciousness and becomes consciousness of its essence; the cultus consists in the consciousness that God knows Himself in the human being and the human being knows itself in God" (LPR I, 181; VPR I, 90). Hegel refers to the cultus as involving "the mystical attitude, the unio mystica" (LPR I, 180; VPR I, 89). He describes the cultus in his lecture manuscript as "the eternal relationship, the eternal process <of knowing> in which the subject posits itself as identical with its essence" (LPR I, 193; VPR I, 102).¹³

Hegel's claim that God is dependent on the cultus, and his view of the union of God and man in the cultus, are strikingly similar to Meister Eckhart's mysticism. In fact, Hegel quotes Eckhart at one point in the Lectures on

13. The words "of knowing" were inserted by Hegel in the margin.

the Philosophy of Religion (the only place in his writings where he does so): "The eye with which God sees me is the eye with which I see Him; my eye and His eye are one and the same. In righteousness I am weighed in God and He in me. If God did not exist nor would I; if I did not exist nor would He. But there is no need to know this, for there are things that are easily misunderstood (and that can be grasped only in the concept" (LPR I, 347-48; VPR I, 248). This is actually a "quilt quotation" made up of lines from several of Eckhart's sermons (certainly the reference to "the concept" looks suspiciously like an Hegelian interpolation).¹⁴ In Sermon Twelve--which seems to be one of the texts Hegel was drawing from--Eckhart remarks that "When all creatures pronounce His name, God comes into being."

We know that in the winter of 1823-24 Hegel was actively discussing Eckhart's ideas with Franz von Baader.¹⁵ Baader himself has left us a record of what was perhaps the first of the occasions on which they met: "I was often with Hegel in Berlin. Once I read him a passage from Meister Eckhart, who was only a name to him. He was so excited by it that the next day he read me an entire lecture on Eckhart, and at the end said: 'There, indeed, we

14. See Cyril O'Regan, "Hegelian Philosophy of Religion and Eckhartian Mysticism," in New Perspectives on Hegel's Philosophy of Religion, ed. David Kolb (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

15. Ibid., 250.

have what we want!'"[Da haben wir es ja, was wir wollen]"¹⁶

In 1823-24, Hegel was, of course, preparing his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, in which the Eckhart reference appears. As I have said, Hegel offers only one quote from Eckhart and discusses him very briefly, so the "entire lecture on Eckhart" mentioned by Baader must refer to the entire Hegelian discussion of religion in which the Eckhart passage occurs, and which Baader apparently mistook (not surprisingly) for a lecture on Eckhartian mysticism!

As further evidence of the "Eckhartianism" of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion, consider the following quotations. In the Encyclopedia Hegel states that "God is God only insofar as he knows Himself: this self-knowledge is, further, a self-consciousness in man and man's knowledge of God, which becomes man's self-knowledge in God" (PS § 564; Wallace, 298). Elsewhere, Hegel remarks that "Insofar as the individual man is at the same time received into the unity of the divine essence, he is the object of the Christian religion, which is the most tremendous demand that may be made upon him" (PN § 247, Z; Petry I, 205-06). Finally, Rosenkranz quotes a fragment from Hegel's manuscripts (probably written not later than 1804) in which

16. See Hegel in Berichten seiner Zeitgenossen, ed. Günther Nicolini (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1970), 261. It is, of course, not true that Eckhart was "only a name" to Hegel in 1823-24. According to H.S. Harris, Hegel may have been familiar with Eckhart as early as 1795. See H.S. Harris, Hegel's Development, Vol. I: Toward the Sunlight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 230.

Hegel states that "the history of God is the history of the whole race."¹⁷ Hegel's philosophy of religion is from the beginning indebted to Eckhart's mysticism.

Hegel does not consider his views to be so "mystical" or "speculative" as to be alien to the ordinary believer, however. In fact, he holds that his way of looking at God and religion are much closer to real religion than to what was called in his time "rational theology" (LPR I, 129; VPR I, 45). We have seen that Hegel does not believe religion to be dependent on philosophy, but he does claim the reverse, that philosophy depends on religion. He writes that "It is the distinctive task of philosophy to transmute the content that is in the representation of religion into the form of thought; the content [itself] cannot be distinguished" (LPR I, 333; VPR I, 235). The philosopher first encounters the content of absolute truth in religion. Indeed, Hegel holds that before Christianity arrived on the scene it would have been impossible for philosophy to present absolute truth in a fully adequate or complete form.

The philosopher depends, then, not only on the community (as I discussed earlier) but specifically on the religious community. Speculative philosophy cannot be done in a vacuum: it requires a certain social and historical context which make it possible. All his life Hegel claimed

17. Karl Rosenkranz, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), 138.

to be a pious Lutheran. The temptation is to take this claim as disingenuous, as the heretical philosopher attempting to cover his tracks to avoid the fate of Fichte and many others. Once it is realized, however, that Hegel's philosophy of religion originates out of the Eckhartian, Böhmean, Oetingerite, and (as I shall discuss shortly) Joachmite-influenced Lutheranism of Württemberg, his claim can be seen as sincere. Hegel's brand of "Lutheranism" would have been nothing unusual to his fellow Swabians.¹⁸

Hegel's philosophy of world history is shaped entirely by his commitment to Christianity. In the last chapter I described how Hegel believes that in studying nature we assume that our object must have an underlying rational structure. Hegel takes the same approach with history. He states that

world history is governed by an ultimate design, that is a rational process--whose rationality is not that of a particular subject, but a divine and absolute reason--this is a proposition whose truth we must assume; its proof lies in the study of world history

18. To be sure, Hegel held some views that would be "heretical" even by the standards of Swabian speculative pietism. For instance, he rejected belief in personal immortality and held instead that human beings only achieve a measure of immortality except insofar as they achieve wisdom and see into the eternal (see LPR III, 304; VPR III, 227-28).

itself, which is the image and enactment of reason. .

. . World history is merely a manifestation of this one original reason; it is one of the particular forms in which reason reveals itself, a reflection of the archetype in a particular element, in the life of nations. (Nisbet, 28; VIG, 30)

Hegel claims further that we are compelled to ask whether "beneath the superficial din and clamour of history, there is not perhaps a silent and mysterious inner process at work, whereby the energy of all phenomena is conserved" (Nisbet, 33; VIG, 36).

In the context of the Philosophy of World History, Hegel uses the term "World Spirit" (Weltgeist). In the Encyclopedia Logic he describes the World Spirit along the lines of Plato's demiurge as a "master workman" constructing itself through history (EL § 13; Geraets, 31). He likens the World Spirit elsewhere to the "true Mercury," who is "the leader of nations" (Nisbet, 31; VIG, 33). "The world Spirit," Hegel states, "is the spirit of the world as it reveals itself through the human consciousness; the relationship of men to it is that of single parts to the whole which is their substance. And this World Spirit corresponds to the Divine Spirit, which is the Absolute Spirit. Since God is omnipresent, He is present in

everyone and appears in everyone's consciousness; and this is the World Spirit" (Nisbet, 52-53; VIG, 60).

Perhaps the most famous concept in Hegel's philosophy of world history is that of the "cunning of reason" (List der Vernunft). This is the "mechanism" whereby the World Spirit makes use of the short-sighted passions and aims of particular men to bring about its universal purposes (see Nisbet, 89; VIG, 105). The "cunning of reason" bears some similarity to Smith's "invisible hand," and, of course, to the concept of divine providence. Hegel himself draws attention to the latter parallel. "Christians," he says, "are initiated into the mysteries of God, and this also supplies us with the key to world history. For we have here a definite knowledge of providence and its plan" (Nisbet, 41; VIG, 46). What can Hegel mean by this claim? How does Christianity supply a key to world history? The answer is surprising, and it involves yet another connection to a heterodox Christian thinker. I will deal with Hegel's debt to this thinker, Joachim de Fiore, in section three. It is to Joachim that we must trace Hegel's notorious doctrine of the "end of history" (which I have already discussed in Chapter Four). There are other influences on Hegel's eschatology, however. In the following section I will first look to the influence--direct and indirect--of mystical Judaism.

2. Issac Luria and Jewish Eschatology

Oetinger remarks in one of his works that "God is in Himself without space, but in the revelation of his hiddenness, he is Himself the space of all things."¹⁹ This idea, that somehow in God's "hiddenness" He is the space of all things, is derived from the Kabbalistic speculations of Issac Luria.

The "new Kabbalah" of Luria, who lived from 1534 to 1572, quickly spread through Europe in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, mostly by word of mouth and through the works of followers (Luria himself wrote little). Scholem writes that "The influence of the Lurianic Kabbalah, which from about 1630 onwards became something like the true theologia mystica of Judaism, can hardly be exaggerated."²⁰ As we will see, there is a strong correspondence between the theosophy of Böhme and Lurianic Kabbalah. Scholem acknowledges this correspondence.²¹ The writings of Luria's followers circulated in Europe widely between 1572 and 1650. It seems likely that Böhme either obtained some of these works, or was instructed directly by a Lurianic Kabbalist. Luria (sometimes spelled "Loria") was born in Jerusalem,

19. "Gott ist in sich selbst ohne Raum, aber in der Offenbarung seiner Verborgenheit ist er selbst der Raum aller Dinge" (W.W. 1. S. 29). See Robert Schneider, Schellings und Hegels schwäbische Geistesansichten (Würzburg-Aumühle: Konrad Triltsch Verlag, 1938), 100.

20. Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (New York: Schocken Books, 1946), 284.

21. Ibid., 237.

but when still a boy his mother took him to live in Egypt after his father's death. In Safed, Luria studied with the famous Kabbalist Moses Cordovero. After Cordovero's death, Luria gathered a group of disciples around himself.

Then and now, many Jews have attacked Luria for his unorthodox views. The major reason for this seems to be his treatment of Ein-Sof, the "infinite" which many Kabbalists identify with God. For Luria, the crucial question is this: how can the world exist at all if we grant the existence of God qua Ein-Sof? If God is truly infinite, no space is left over for creation. Thus, given that the world exists, it must have come about through God's self-limitation of His infinite nature. This self-limitation is called by Luria the tsimtsum (frequently transliterated by German-speaking scholars as zimzum), which means "concentration" or "contraction."²² Thus, for Luria, God, the infinite, allows the finite to come to be within himself. (This is, of course, in essence identical to Hegel's view of the infinite and finite: the true [Wahrhafte] infinite contains the finite within itself.)

22. The concept of Tsimtsum is not original with Luria, though his particular use of it is. It occurs in earlier Kabbalistic treatises. Scholem also draws a parallel between the tsimtsum and ideas in the Gnostic "Book of the Great Logos," a text preserved in Coptic translation. Scholem writes that "Here we are taught that all primordial spaces and their 'fatherhoods' have come into being because of the 'little idea,' the space of which God has left behind as the shining world of light when He 'withdrew Himself into Himself.' This withdrawal that precedes all emanation is repeatedly stressed" (Ibid., 264).

Luria's view is radical because it denies that the world comes to be through God's revelation or emanation. Instead, it is precisely through God's limitation and concealment (Oetinger's Verborgenheit) that a world comes into being.²³ Scholem describes the tsimtsum as a "withdrawing into oneself."²⁴

Recall from Chapter Five that the sephirah of Din is equivalent to a "contracting" force in God. The Kabbalah identifies Din with "fire," "wrath," and "severity."²⁵ Din is the opposite of Hesed, "mercy" or the "expanding" power. Din and Hesed balance each other: severity of judgement is balanced by mercy; sharp distinction, cutting-off or closedness are balanced by unity, embrace, or openness. Böhme's word for Din is the "Sour"--it is an indrawing, a pulling away, a shutting off and negation of all else. It is significant that Böhme's account of the source-spirits begins with the Sour, with the contracting element. Some followers of Luria describe the tsimtsum in terms of Din. In Scholem's words, "When the primal intention to create came into being, Ein-Sof gathered together the roots of Din, which had been previously concealed within Him, to one place, from which the power of mercy had departed. In this way the power of Din became concentrated."

23. See Gershom Scholem, Kabbalah (New York: New American Library, 1974), 129; and Major Trends, 261.

24. Scholem, Major Trends, 261.

25. Ibid., 237.

Scholem describes tsimtsum, in connection with Din, as "an act of judgment and self-limitation."²⁶ Given that Din is the origin of evil, God's contraction is the root of all evil.²⁷ Luria's follower Israel Sarug, who helped spread the master's ideas in the late sixteenth century, speaks of Ein-Sof before the tsimtsum in a way which is even more strikingly Böhmean. As Scholem puts it, Sarug held that "In the beginning, Ein-Sof took pleasure in its own autarkic self-sufficiency, and this 'pleasure' produced a kind of 'shaking' (ni'anu'a) which was the movement of Ein-Sof within itself."²⁸ Scholem notes that Sarug's influence was felt in Italy, Holland, Poland, and Germany.²⁹

Luria holds that each new act of creation or manifestation in the world is the result of a simultaneous contraction and expansion.³⁰ This pair of forces generally goes under the names of histalkut ("regression," or contraction) and hitpashtut ("egression," or expansion).³¹ Luria is obviously the ultimate source of Goethe's theory of expansion and contraction, discussed in Chapter Two. (In Chapters Four and Five I also discussed these concepts in connection with Hegel's "Böhmean myth" of the fall of Lucifer.) Scholem states that "This double-facedness in

26. Scholem, Kabbalah, 130; See also Major Trends, 263.

27. See Scholem, Major Trends, 263.

28. Scholem, Kabbalah, 132.

29. Scholem, Major Trends, 257.

30. Ibid., 261.

31. Scholem, Kabbalah, 131.

the process of emanation is typical of the dialectical tendency of Lurianic Kabbalah."³²

God's contraction in the tsimtsum does not create the world by itself, however. Luria and his followers envision the Ein-Sof as an infinite sphere, in which a smaller sphere of empty space comes into being through the tsimtsum; this is the place of creation. Into this space God injects a ray of light (Luria seems to identify the divine substance with light³³). At this point the theory becomes rather murky, but it seems that the light differentiates itself into the classical ten sephiroth. These are depicted as concentric circles of light, filling the space within God (see Figure 14). The circle and the straight line (the line of light entering the spherical space) become key symbolic forms for Lurianic Kabbalah. The circle is a "natural form." The circular form characterizes all of creation (for instance, the orbits of the planets, the endless cycle of the seasons, the reproductive cycle, etc.). The line comes to represent humanity. It is a willed form which represents a divergence from the natural.³⁴ As I have said, the light which comes from Ein-Sof first takes the form of a line, before it is "deformed" into spherical states. Thus, in identifying man with the

32. Ibid., 131

33. Ibid., 131

34. Ibid., 136.

line (a topic to which I shall return to shortly), Luria is linking humanity with the divine nature.

Indeed, the first definite form that appears in the sphere of creation is that of Adam Kadmon, primordial man (see Figure 15). Adam Kadmon exists in a realm above the four worlds of classical Kabbalah: azilut, beri'ah, yetsirah, and asiyyah (see Chapter Five). Adam Kadmon mediates the light of Ein-Sof to the four worlds: "From his eyes, mouth, ears and nose, the lights of the sephiroth burst forth."³⁵ Obviously, this account has to be taken in a non-temporal sense. Adam Kadmon is an Aristotelian final cause: he is logically prior to the rest of creation, and simultaneously the end toward which creation is moving (as I shall return to shortly). Adam Ha-Rishon is Adam of the Bible, who is the (imperfect) earthly embodiment of Adam Kadmon. An analogy can be drawn between this doctrine and Hegel's thought. Ein-Sof and its sephirotic structure corresponds to the Absolute Idea, which is abstract, withdrawn "into itself." Adam Kadmon is Spirit, which in its purest form (Absolute Spirit) participates in the divine nature. Adam Ha-Rishon is Spirit as developing in history: from the "fall of man" and the loss of the immediate relationship to God, to the recovery of that relationship in its true form, in thought. (Luria's

35. Scholem, Major Trends, 265.

account of the restoration from the Fall is somewhat different from Hegel's, as I shall explain shortly.)

The light of the sephiroth streaming from Adam Kadmon was collected in separate "vessels," but the vessels containing the differentiated light from the seven lower sephiroth proved incapable of holding the light, and shattered. The shards of these vessels are the source of matter. This cataclysm completely scrambled the divine cosmic structure, resulting in the emergence of an imperfect material order: nothing in nature is how it ought to be, all is imperfect. It is in this matter--the account of the "breaking of the vessels"--that Luria's cosmology is particularly obscure. It all sounds like a cosmic accident, but according to Luria it was all predestined.³⁶ If this is the case, then God's contraction and the subsequent creation of the imperfect universe are events that had to occur; in some way God needed them to happen. The picture again looks Böhmean. Indeed, Scholem remarks that "Luria is driven to something very much like a mythos of God giving birth to Himself; indeed, this seems to me to be the focal point of this whole involved and frequently rather obscure and inconsistent description."³⁷

Before going on to the rest of Luria's doctrine, it would be helpful to stop and consider what Hegel knew about Luria's Kabbalism as described thus far. In Chapter Five I

36. Scholem, Kabbalah, 138.

37. Scholem, Major Trends, 271.

briefly discussed Hegel's treatment of Kabbalism in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy. Hegel's principle source of information seems to have been Johann Jacob Brucker's Historia Critica Philosophiae, which appeared in five Latin volumes in Leipzig in 1742-44 (a second edition appearing in 1766-67). One interesting feature of Brucker is that he devotes considerable attention to the Hermetic tradition. He discusses the Hermetica, as well as figures like Bruno, Lull, Campanella, Reuchlin, Agrippa, Cudworth, More, Fludd, Böhme, and Francis Mercury van Helmont. Most significant, however, is the more than 150 pages Brucker devotes to the Kabbalah in Volume II. Brucker's account of Kabbalah is almost entirely Lurianic in its orientation. As a consequence, the account Hegel gives of the Kabbalah in his Lectures is also decidedly Lurianic, even though Hegel never mentions Luria (Brucker does). Instead, Hegel mentions one of Brucker's Lurianic sources, Abraham Cohen Irira (sometimes Herrera) and his work Porta coelorum (The Gate of the Heavens). Hegel cites this text directly, so it may possibly be that he read it, in addition to reading about it in Brucker. Irira (d. Amsterdam 1635 or 1639) was a Spanish Jew whose two major works, the aforementioned Gate of the Heavens, and Beth Elohim (The House of God) were translated in the late seventeenth century from Spanish into Hebrew and exercised considerable influence. Porta coelorum was one of the texts published--in Latin

translation--in Rosenroth's Kabbala Denudata, which was so well-known in Hegel's time that he very likely read it in preparing his remarks on the Kabbalah.

Hegel begins his account of the Kabbalah by mentioning the Sefer Yezirah and Sefer Ha Zohar, calling the former the more important of the two. He writes that Sefer Yezirah "has some very interesting general principles . . . , " but that it tends to "sink into the fantastic" (LHP II, 394-395; Werke 19, 426). Hegel deals with the Ein-Sof and the origin of creation as follows: "The emanation connected [with Ein-Sof] is the effect of the first cause by the limitation of that first infinite whose boundary it is. In this one cause all is contained eminenter, not formaliter but causaliter" (LHP II, 396; Werke 19, 427). This is obviously a description of Lurianic tsimtsum. Hegel goes on to say that "The second element of importance is the Adam Kadmon, the first man, Keter, the first that arose, the highest crown, the microcosm, the macrocosm, with which the world that emanated stands in connection as the efflux of light" (LHP II, 396; Werke 19, 427). Again, this is Luria's Kabbalah: Adam Kadmon as the first and highest created being, as close to the divine nature, and as mediating the divine light to the rest of creation. Adam Kadmon was subsequently mentioned by Hegel several times in his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion (see LPR I, 382 n. 41; III, 99, 288; VPR I, 278; III, 36, 213). Hegel goes

on to mention the ten sephiroth in general (not individually) and discusses the four lower worlds of azilut, beri'ah, yetsirah, and asiyyah (I have already discussed Hegel's treatment of these in Chapter Five). We cannot know for sure that Hegel's knowledge of Lurianic Kabbalah came from any source other than Brucker, however Lurianic Kabbalah was mediated to Hegel by Böhme and by Oetinger, both of whom are deeply indebted to it.

Scholem notes that whereas Kabbalah before Luria had been concerned mainly with the beginning of time--with creation--Luria, to a great extent, shifted the focus of Kabbalists to the end of time.³⁸ This may seem surprising in light of Luria's highly original account of creation. Recall that Luria's doctrine of the "breaking of the vessels" involves a predestined "scrambling" of the cosmic order: the physical world which results is a flawed and imperfect expression of the divine order. The story cannot end there, of course. Luria insists that the world must be made whole, that the physical world must be completed or brought to perfection. This would "complete" the cosmic process begun in God's tsimtsum by making the finite within the infinite a faithful image of the infinite. This idea is called by Luria Tikkun (the term is, again, not original with Luria but his use of it is certainly original). Tikkun is the cosmic restoration at the end of time.

38. Ibid., 245.

According to Scholem, Luria held that all things are interrelated (in other words, he held to the theory of internal relations later made famous by Hegel).³⁹

The nature of the lowest regions of being is intimately linked to the highest, and just as the highest can affect the lowest (as in the tides, or the influence of the stars on the personality) so too the lowest can affect the highest.⁴⁰ Thus it is possible for created beings to benefit or to harm the cosmic order. Scholem writes that Luria believed that "The process in which God conceives, brings forth and develops Himself does not reach its final conclusion in God. Certain parts of the process of restitution are allotted to man."⁴¹ The "cosmic assignment" of men on earth is to perfect themselves, to realize the nature of Adam Kadmon in Adam Ha-Rishon and thereby to "lift" the fallen, created world up to its pure, initial state of being in the light of God (this is not conceived of literally, of course, as a transformation of matter into light).

Man's task is to perfect himself and to build a social, cultural, and moral world in which material being is used for ends sanctioned by divine law. Scholem writes that "By fulfilling the commandments of the Torah, man restores his own spiritual structure; he carves it out of

39. Ibid., 254.

40. Scholem discusses this idea in connection with Kabbalism as a whole (See Ibid., 27; 223).

41. Ibid., 273.

himself, as it were. And since every part corresponds to a commandment, the solution of the task demands the complete fulfillment of all the 613 commandments."⁴² As a consequence, of this view, Scholem notes that Luria tended "to extreme conservatism" in his attitudes toward custom and law.⁴³ After all, these laws and customs had their origin in the covenant of the Jewish people with God. What can the real purpose of this covenant have been? Luria thinks that the Law is essentially an instruction manual for the restoration and completion of the divine order.⁴⁴ Thus if the Tikkun is to come to pass it is crucial that the Law must be strictly observed.

For Luria, the appearance of the Messiah is simply the achievement of Tikkun.⁴⁵ Like the pietist J.A. Bengel, whom I shall discuss in the next section, Luria even went so far as to give the specific year in which the Tikkun would be consummated: 1575. Summing up Luria's position, Scholem states that "it is man who adds the final touch to the divine countenance; it is he who completes the enthronement of God, the King and the mystical creator of all things, in His own Kingdom of Heaven; it is he who perfects the Maker of all things!"⁴⁶

42. Ibid., 279.

43. Scholem, Kabbalah, 426-27.

44. See Scholem, Major Trends, 268, 275-76.

45. Ibid., 274.

46. Ibid., 273-74.

The similarity of these ideas to Hegel's thought is clear. Hegel holds that the true infinite (the Absolute Idea) "contains" the finite: nature is a "reflection" or "specification" of the Logos; it is an "other" to Idea yet at the same time is contained within its compass. Nevertheless, nature is an imperfect expression of Absolute Idea; it is the "fallenness" of Idea. In Spirit, a natural being, man, rises above nature and comes to realize its true, eternal being as one with the Absolute Idea (Adam Ha-Rishon, or earthly man, realizing his identity with Adam Kadmon). Man is the being who "takes over" nature and transforms it according to the ideal, even bending his own passions and inclinations to conform to the "universal." We "return" to the pure light of Absolute Idea not only through philosophy--through the appropriation of the created world in thought--but through obedience to the edicts of the divine State, which is the guardian of the customs and laws of Ethical Life.

It would be helpful in this context to recall my discussion of Hegel's "Böhme myth" of 1804-05 in which he explicitly makes use of the idea of a "contraction" (Zusammennehmen) in God and of God's "wrath" (Zorn; the similarity to Kabbalistic Din scarcely needs comment). Böhme and Oetinger also held "Lurianic" views of the role of man in the restoration of the divine order (I have discussed them in Chapters One and Two).

I have just drawn a parallel between the Kabbalistic view of Tikkun as realized through adherence to tradition, and Hegel's doctrine of Objective Spirit and its role in consummating God's nature: a striking, but, it might seem, improbable comparison. If we look beyond the Lurianic tradition and to Kabbalistic eschatology in general, however, the comparison finds considerable support. Specifically, we must look at the Kabbalists' treatment of the tenth and final sephirah, Malkhut or Shekhinah.

As I discussed in Chapter Five, Malkhut ("Kingdom," sometimes "Glory") is conceived of as feminine--in contrast to the "male" Tiferet and Yesod (the "organ" of Tiferet)--and is often referred to under the alternate name of Shekhinah or "Divine Presence." If one looks at a drawing of the Tree of Life (such as Figure 11), Malkhut seems almost like an extension of the Tree, a sort of appendage. This is not accidental, for Malkhut represents the divine presence in the world: with Malkhut the Sephiroth have reached down into the world of space and time. In Chapter Five I discussed how some Kabbalists take the Ein-Sof or Infinite to be identical to the Ayin, or Nothing. Scholem maintains that Ayin is a kind of primal unity that transcends the subject-object distinction.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, although Ein-Sof/Ayin is neither subject nor object, its telos is to develop into a true or absolute subject. Ayin

47. Ibid., 221.

is said to become Ani, "I" (Ayin le-Ani, "Nothing changes into I")⁴⁸ According to the Kabbalists, "God willed to see God," to become fully manifest to Himself; to achieve perfect self-knowledge or self-relation.⁴⁹ The "I" of God is identified by many Kabbalists with Malkhut or "Kingdom."

Let us look more closely at what it means to identify Malkhut, God's "I," with Shekhinah. As I have said, Shekhinah is the "Divine Presence." Scholem writes that Shekhinah is "the personification and hypostasis of God's 'indwelling' or 'presence' in the world. . . . In the literal sense, God's indwelling or Shekhinah means His visible or hidden presence in a given place, his immediacy."⁵⁰ Scholem speculates that Shekhinah/Malkhut is feminine because it was thought of as a "vessel" which receives all the other sephiroth.⁵¹ Thus, if the sephiroth are conceived as the aspects or moments of God's being, all the moments are contained within Shekhinah, just as all the moments of Hegel's Logic are contained within the final moment, the Absolute Idea. Yet, the Shekhinah is conceived of as being in the world. Thus, the final and--perhaps it would not be misleading to say--highest moment of God's being is God's "indwelling" or "presence" in the world of

48. Ibid., 218.

49. Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, A Kabbalistic Universe (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1977), 7.

50. Scholem, On The Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Schocken Books, 1991), 141-47.

51. Ibid., 160.

space-time. Scholem writes that "The last Sephirah performs a different function from all the other Sephiroth: it is one with all the others and yet separate, because it performs a mission on their behalf to the world, like a princess coming from afar."⁵² The parallel to Hegel is this: Shekhinah is like Objective Spirit, it is a "realization" in the world of Absolute Idea; it is "one" with Absolute Idea, yet the Idea, as formal and eternal, is also separate from it.⁵³

"Objective Spirit" for Hegel, of course, refers to social institutions: Ethical Life. What has been said so far establishes nothing of the kind for Shekhinah; so far Shekhinah simply sounds like the burning bush. Consider, however, the following lines from Joseph Gikatilla (thirteenth century):

[In the days of the Patriarchs] the Shekhinah was in suspense [literally, "hanging in the air"], and found no resting place for its feet on earth, as in the beginning of Creation. But then came Moses, of blessed memory, and all of Israel together with him built the Tabernacle and the vessels, and repaired the

52. Ibid., 168.

53. It is also interesting to note that Böhme, as I discussed in Chapter Two, viewed "God's Wisdom" as feminine, and saw the highest moment of God's Wisdom, Body (the seventh source-spirit) as a tangible presence. Scholem notes that Philo of Alexandria treated God's Wisdom as feminine in form (Ibid., 142).

broken channels, and put the ranks in order, and repaired the ponds, and drew live water into them from the House of Water Drawing, and then brought the Shekhinah back to its dwelling among the lower ones--into the Tent, but not upon the ground as in the beginning of Creation. And the hint of this is: "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" [Exod. 25:8]. We find that the Shekhinah was like a guest, moving from place to place, and of this it is said "and I shall dwell among them" and not "I shall dwell below" but "among them"--i.e., like a lodger. Until David and Soloman came, and placed the Shekhinah on solid ground in the Temple of Jerusalem.⁵⁴

The implication of this passage seems to be that Shekhinah--the living presence of God, containing all the attributes of God--came to be in the Temple of Jerusalem, the religious, cultural, and moral center of the tribe of Abraham.

Scholem quotes a popular Kabbalistic epigram: "Israel forms the limbs of the Shekhinah."⁵⁵ This appears to identify the nation of Israel (meaning the Jewish people, its culture and traditions) with God's presence in the world. It was in Jewish Gnostic circles in late antiquity that the Shekhinah became hypostatized, i.e., God's

54. Quoted in Ibid., 178.

55. Ibid., 175.

presence in the world came to denote a specific historical locus or conjunction of factors. From this arose the identification of Shekhinah with the keneset Yisrael ("the community of Israel").⁵⁶ These Jewish Gnostics held to a doctrine of the "exile of the Shekhinah," according to which God's presence in the world is like the "divine spark" which exists in the terrestrial world, and must be helped to ignite and fill the fallen world with divine presence. This is the mission of the keneset Yisrael.⁵⁷ (Thus it appears that Luria's views about the role of man in redeeming the world were present in germinal form in earlier Kabbalah.) Unlike Christianity, Jewish Kabbalism sees redemption as occurring within time and within the world. As Scholem puts it, "redemption is expressed as the end of the 'exile of the Shekhinah,' the restoration of the Divine unity throughout all areas of existence."⁵⁸ Thus, we find in the Kabbalah something very much like Hegel's concept of the "end of history": the "end" of the world and of man is realized in time and on earth through the "presence of God" coming to be in human institutions, in "Objective Spirit."

However, it might be objected that one crucial "Hegelian" element is missing from this Kabbalist account

56. Scholem, Kabbalah, 31.

57. Ibid., 22.

58. Ibid., 335. It should be pointed out, as with everything in the Kabbalah, that this position was held by many, but not all Kabbalists. There is seldom universal agreement about anything among Kabbalists.

of "Objective Spirit": no indication has been given thus far that God requires that He become present in the keneset Yisrael. In Hegel, of course, Absolute Idea--God "in his eternal essence"--is abstract and formal, lacking full realization or actualization. Thus, God, to be God, must realize Himself in Spirit. Do the Kabbalists maintain something similar? Recall what was said earlier about God's achievement of "self-consciousness" or "ego" ("I") after emerging from the state of Ein-Sof = Ayin, the Being-Nothing beyond subject and object. This conception (held by some, but by no means all, Kabbalists) clearly implies development in God, and a final stage of perfection involving self-reflection. It is interesting to note that in the Zohar, Shekhinah is referred to more than once as "I."⁵⁹ As Scholem writes, "the Zohar identifies the highest development of God's personality with precisely that stage of His unfolding which is nearest to human experience, indeed which is immanent and mysteriously present in every one of us."⁶⁰ This is the evidence needed to make the Hegelian parallel stick: God, to be God, does require his hypostatization in the keneset Yisrael.

The influence of these Kabbalistic ideas on Hegel is almost entirely indirect, by way of Böhme and the Swabian pietist movement. In the next section I will discuss the eschatology that Hegel inherited from his homeland, and its

59. See 1:6b, 65b; 2:98a, 236b.

60. Scholem, Major Trends, 216-17.

origins not only in Kabbalism but in the Christian mystical tradition.

3. Joachimite Mysticism and the End of History

In an article on the influence of Böhme on Hegel, David Walsh raises an interesting question: Why would Hegel believe that history has to have a structure (let alone an end) in the first place?⁶¹ Walsh's answer is to point to the influence of Böhme, though I think he would agree with me in identifying the ultimate source as Joachim de Fiore (1135-1202).

Joachim was born in Calabria, the son of an official in the Sicilian court. As a young man he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, which led him to decide to devote his life to God. After a brief stint as a hermit on Mt. Etna, Joachim entered the Benedictine monastery of Corazzo, where he soon rose to the rank of abbot. In the 1180's, he fought to have the monastery incorporated into the Cistercian order. This brought Joachim into contact with Pope Lucius III, who suggested to Joachim that he commit his unusual views to writing. By the time the monastery was welcomed into the Cistercian order in 1188, Joachim and a group of followers had already broken off and founded their own house at San Giovanni de Fiore (sometimes

61. David Walsh, "The Historical Dialectic of Spirit: Jacob Böhme's Influence on Hegel" in History and System: Hegel's Philosophy of History, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 15.

written "Flora" or "Flore" or "Floris"). They were promptly repudiated by the Cistercians. By the time of his death, Joachim had become a celebrity, corresponding with and advising the great men of his age.

According to Eric Voegelin, Joachim's great innovations were to conceive of history as having an eidos, a formal structure, and to "immanentize the eschaton," to hold that the end of time will take place in time.⁶² Joachim held that history was not simply a series of contingent events. History consists of certain definite stages, moving toward a final end. Joachim's "immanentization of the eschaton" is no more paradoxical than Hegel's "end of history": time will continue, but there will be no new "ages," the story of man will come to an end, even though men will live on. To draw an analogy, fairy tales always end with ". . . and they lived happily ever after." We know that Hansel and Gretel and their family lived on and things continued to happen to them. We're not interested in hearing about those other things, however, because it's fair to say that what happened to Hansel and Gretel in later life was merely a footnote to their terrifying adventures in the woods. Similarly, both Joachim and Hegel hold that at a certain point all the different forms of human life and society and culture will have revealed themselves, all meaningful struggles will be

62. Eric Voegelin, The New Science of Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 119, 120.

over. Anything that happens afterward is simply more of the same. Both Joachim and Hegel hold that the final phase of history involves the coming into being of certain "highest" or most perfect ways of life. It is unclear, however, whether they believe that these advances have to endure, or whether certain forms out of the past may reappear, temporarily, from time to time.

Joachim's eidos of history is the Christian Trinity. Joachim speaks of the "Age of the Father," "Age of the Son," and "Age of the Holy Spirit" (the word he normally uses to refer to each is status, though he sometimes employs tempus, and aetas; regnum or "Kingdom" was often employed by his followers). Each age is seen as representing an advance in spirituality, and each is dominated by a different archetype: the layman, the priest, and the monk. The final stage of history, the final level of human spirituality, is literally an age of monks. One commentator writes that "For Joachim history was the story of the gradual triumph of spirit over flesh, of contemplation over literal-mindedness. This triumph was inseparable from the history of monasticism."⁶³ Joachim attributed a variety of different characteristics to each of the ages, as the following passage indicates:

63. Bernard McGinn, introduction to Joachim in Apocalyptic Spirituality, ed. and trans. McGinn (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 107.

The mysteries of the Holy Scriptures point us to three orders of the world: to the first, in which we are under the Law; to the second, in which we are under grace; to the third, which we already imminently expect, and in which we shall be under a yet more abundant grace . . . The first condition is therefore that of perception, the second that of partially perfected wisdom, the third, the fullness of knowledge. The first condition is in the bondage of slaves, the second, in the bondage of sons, the third in liberty. The first in fear, the second in faith, the third in love. The first in the condition of slaves, the second of free men, the third of friends. The first of boys, the second of men, the third of the aged. The first stands in the light of stars, the second in the light of dawn, the third in the brightness of day . . . The first condition is related to the Father, the second to the Son, the third to the Holy Spirit.⁶⁴

In the third age, organized religion simply ends--the church "withers away"--and is replaced by a highly individualistic form of worship.⁶⁵ The piety and contemplativeness of the individual are what is important,

64. Quoted in O'Regan, The Heterodox Hegel, 266.

65. See Karl Löwith, Reason in History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 151.

not the sacraments of the priesthood. Men will no longer be able to lead inauthentic lives and expect salvation: no longer will they be able to sin with abandon and receive absolution.

Joachim made frequent use of images to convey his ideas. Joachim saw the stages of the development of man's spirituality and redemption as unfolding like the growth of a tree, finally bearing fruit in the third age.⁶⁶ Some of the other images he employed included circles, eagles, and a ten-stringed psaltery. He used interlocking circles to represent the three ages. In Figure 21, Joachim shows the Tetragrammaton, the four-letter name of God, interpenetrating the circles of the three ages, perhaps indicating that the being of God or of God's presence is somehow bound up with the ages themselves. Joachim believed that the third age would begin in 1260. ("Eschatologists" seem to find calculating the exact date of the climax of history or the end of time almost irresistible; we have already seen this with Luria, and we shall soon see it with Bengel and Oetinger.)

Joachim's characterization of the third age as a time of pious, contemplative, monastic "inwardness," and his prediction that the organized Church would dissolve, obviously make him out to be a "proto-Protestant" figure if

66. Joachim's Book of Figures (a work which was unknown until 1937) employs this simile. It is, of course, irresistible to compare it to Hegel's "bud and blossom" metaphor in the Preface to the Phenomenology (Miller, 2).

ever there was one. Joachim was by no means alone in his "Protestantism," however. Contrary to what is often thought, during Joachim's time the laity became tremendously interested in establishing a closer, personal connection to God and a greater understanding of the Christian mysteries. Around the end of the twelfth century, the elevation of the host before the eyes of the faithful was introduced into the Mass, apparently as a concession to this interest. While Joachim was careful to avoid official censure, his followers were anything but cautious. For instance, Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, who published his major work, Liber introductorius in Evangelium aeternum, in 1249, declared that Joachim's prophecies were a new Gospel which nullified the authority of the Church and Scripture. Another outgrowth of Joachimite prophecy were the notorious Flagellants, who believed that their self-torture was a necessary preliminary to the arrival of the Age of the Holy Spirit.

The origins of Joachim's thought are the topic of much speculation. Emma Jung, for example, sees an influence of Catharism and mystical Judaism: "Joachim's idea springs from a conception already extant in Judaism . . . of a kingdom to be established on earth by the Messiah at the end of time."⁶⁷ As to the matter of Joachim and Hegel, the similarity between them was pointed out to Hegel himself in

67. Jung and Franz, The Grail Legend, trans. Andrea Dykes (Boston: Sigo Press, 1986), 318.

an 1810 letter from the occultist K.J.H. Windischmann.⁶⁸ Hegel himself never mentions Joachim. Nevertheless, Contemporary scholars such as Clark Butler, Laurence Dickey, Antoine Faivre, Henri de Lubac, Michael Murray, and Cyril O'Regan have argued for a Joachimite influence on Hegel.⁶⁹ O'Regan offers a list of correspondences between Hegel's thought and Joachim's:

(1) time and history are vehicles of the exegesis of knowledge, freedom, and religious relation where the subject of differentiation is more the community than the individual; (2) the conviction that the eschaton and the kingdom of God is at hand; (3) the assertion that the Trinity is both open to and involved in the historical process; (4) the association of the eschaton with the Spirit or Holy Spirit; (5) the dismantling of the sacred-profane history distinction [i.e., the distinction between the history of divine

68. Hoffmeister #155. The parallel has been developed by O'Regan (*The Heterodox Hegel*) and Clark Butler, "Hegelian Panentheism as Joachimite Christianity," in *New Perspectives on Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, ed. David Kolb (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

69. See Clark Butler, "Hegelian Panentheism"; Laurence Dickey, Hegel: Religion, Economics, and the Politics of Spirit 1770-1807 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Antoine Faivre, "Ancient and Medieval Sources of Modern Esoteric Movements," in Modern Esoteric Spirituality, ed. Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 37; Henri de Lubac, La Spiritualité de Joachim de Fiore (Paris: Sycamore, 1979-81), Vol. 2, 359-77; Michael Murray, Modern Philosophy of History (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1970), 89-113; Cyril O'Regan, The Heterodox Hegel (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

acts and the history of merely human, earthly acts is collapsed]; (6) despite the stress introduced by massive pneumatic emphasis [i.e., emphasis on the Spirit or third stage] the positing of Christ as the objective condition of the kingdom of God; and (7) the centrality of the role played by revelation in the sense of revelation of secrets granted in Endzeit.⁷⁰

O'Regan's list is, of course, only a catalogue of similarities or points of correspondence between Hegel and Joachim, not an argument for Joachim's actual influence on Hegel. I turn now to evidence of that influence. In his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion Hegel deals in detail with the Trinity as constituting the "moments" of God (universality, diremption, and reconciliation⁷¹). In the 1831 version of the lectures, Hegel introduces a new twist: he begins calling Father, Son and Holy Spirit the "Kingdom [Reich] of the Father," "Kingdom of the Son," and "Kingdom of the Spirit." This use of "Kingdom" for the persons of the Trinity was employed widely by followers of Joachim. This alone, of course, does not necessarily constitute a significant Joachimite influence. However, Hegel's treatment of the Trinity is, like Joachim's,

70. O'Regan, Heterodox Hegel, 270. See my discussion of pansophia in Chapter Five.

71. See Peter C. Hodgson, Introduction to Hegel: Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), Vol. 3, 50.

temporal: he holds that the reconciliation of the diremption in God takes time; only at a certain point in human history is this accomplished. In the Encyclopedia Logic Hegel notes that "What underlies divine Providence at the level of thought will soon prove to be the Concept" (EL § 147, Z; Geraets, 222). Once it is realized that the Concept, as the crowning conception of the Logic, contains three moments which correspond to the Christian Trinity, the similarity to Joachim is striking: both Hegel and Joachim see the hand of God, Providence, playing out in history according to the pattern of the Trinity. Hegel does not repeat Joachim's treatment of the Age of the Father or of the Son (Hegel identifies the Kingdom of the Father with his Logic, and the Son with nature) but there is a striking correspondence between Hegel's Kingdom of the Spirit and Joachim's.

There is a strong similarity between Joachim's conception of spirituality in the third age and the pietist movement which arose in Germany centuries later. Both involve a rejection of the church as an intermediary between ordinary men and God and the claim that the lay community of worshippers is able to achieve salvation and knowledge of God unaided. Hegel explicitly identifies his Kingdom of the Spirit with the community of worshippers (LPR III, 371; VPR III, 287). He refers to the community as "existing Spirit" and refers to Spirit as "God existing

as community" (LPR III, 331; VPR III, 254). Both men conceive the third stage as one of reconciliation, of higher spirituality or fully adequate knowledge, and of the actualization of human freedom. Further, as O'Regan notes, both Hegel and Joachim make the unusual move of locating the eschaton in time, Joachim believing that it is at hand, Hegel believing that it has already happened. Both Hegel and Joachim have Christ playing a crucial role on the way to the achievement of the third age, Hegel insisting that the reality of human freedom (realized fully in the third age) was first revealed through Christianity.

Hegel's "Joachimite" treatment of the Trinity in the Lectures dovetails with his Böhmeanism. This is the case specifically with respect to the Kingdom of the Father. Not only is there a Trinity of Father-Son-Spirit, there is also a secondary trinity immanent within the Father. As I have said, Hegel identifies the Kingdom of the Father with the pure, eidetic realm of the Logic, thus the "trinity of the Father" corresponds to the three divisions of the Logic.⁷² In the 1831 Lectures Hegel speaks of the "trinity of the father" (or, as O'Regan calls it, the "immanent trinity") as involving "the element of pure ideality and universality, in the silent abode of the thinking spirit." He goes on to say that in this abode "God is immediately

72. See O'Regan, Heterodox Hegel, 91, 108, 111. Hodgson speaks of it as a "preworldly Trinity," thus calling to mind the eternal character of the Logic. Hodgson, Introduction to LPR III, 50.

present to Himself through His differentiation, which, however, is not yet externalized at this stage. It is by virtue of this [inner] movement that God is spirit. Thus the doctrine of the Trinity pertains to this sphere, although it is preferentially termed the Kingdom of the Father" (LPR III, 362; VPR III, 281; my italics). Thus, in the "immanent trinity" God is closed within Himself ("not yet externalized"). Hegel uses this language explicitly: in the 1824 lectures he states that "God is the true God, Spirit, because He is not merely Father, and hence closed up within Himself" (LPR III, 219; VPR III, 150). In the Philosophy of Spirit Hegel states that "God the Father is for Himself, shut up within Himself, abstract, and consequently not yet the God of Spirit and of truth" (PS § 384, Z; Petry I, 63). Hegel also refers to God in this sphere as "loving Himself" (LPR I, 124-25; 41). Thus, there is a clear parallel to Böhme's "immanent trinity" of God "in Himself," the Sour, Sweet, and Bitter (see Chapter One⁷³). In Six Mystical Points, Böhme refers to "God in his triad" as "the first Magia."⁷⁴

The "immanent trinity" is not an innovation of the Lectures; it is to be found in the Jena "triangle fragment" in which the "triangle of triangles" represents the process

73. O'Regan also recognizes the parallel to Böhme (O'Regan, Heterodox Hegel, 109, 130-31).

74. Basarab Nicolescu, Science, Meaning and Evolution: The Cosmology of Jacob Böhme, trans. Rob Baker (New York: Parabola Books, 1991), 229.

of God's coming to consciousness of Himself. There are three triangles in all, with the "triangle of triangles" being the figure made up by the set of the three.

The first triangle is described by Hegel as follows: "In this First, which is at the same time only One side of the absolutely unique Triangle, there is only the Godhead in reciprocal intuition and cognition with Himself." This is even more strikingly Böhmean than what Hegel says in the Lectures. David Walsh writes: "Hegel suggested, as Böhme also did, that the first Trinity of God in himself is not sufficient for the divine self-revelation."⁷⁵ Therefore a second triangle appears, "God the Son." Hegel writes: "In the Son, God is cognizant of Himself as God. He says to Himself: I am God. The within-itself ceases to be a negative."

The separated moment of that which stands opposed to the Godhead must be "transfigured" and brought into unity within God. Hegel writes: "the Son must go right through the Earth, must overcome Evil, and in that he steps over to one side as the victor, must awaken the other, the self-cognition of God, as a new cognition that is one with God, or as the Spirit of God: whereby the middle becomes a beautiful, free, divine middle, the Universe of God." This heralds the arrival of a new triangle, of the Holy Spirit.

75. David Walsh, The Esoteric Origins of Modern Ideological Thought: Böhme and Hegel (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1978), 321.

As I said in Chapter Three, this fragment is the "blueprint" for Hegel's system. The nature of his Logic is expressed here very clearly: the first "triad" of the system (in the later Logic, Being-Essence-Concept) is the "Idea of God." This Idea is expressed (made real) in the triads of the Son (Philosophy of Nature: Mechanics, Physics, Organics) and Spirit (Subjective, Objective, and Absolute Spirit). I noted in Chapter Three that this fragment seems to be influenced by Böhme, Baader, Oetinger, Eckhart, and Proclus. I can now add Joachim to the list. In the Lectures Hegel speaks only of a trinity immanent within the Father, but we know from the Philosophies of Nature and Spirit that the Son and Spirit must be triadically structured as well.

If we ask how Hegel could have encountered the ideas of the Calabrian monk, the answer is that, like so much else, those ideas were a part of the Württemberg cultural milieu to which he and Schelling and other Swabian intellectuals were exposed. Joachim enjoyed a revival during the time of the Reformation, when his ideas were used as a weapon against the papacy by the followers of Luther. As we have seen, Joachimism is remarkably "Protestant" in spirit. Writing about Joachim in 1866, Ernest Renan marvelled that the Reformation had not begun with Joachim in the thirteenth century.⁷⁶ Joachimite

76. See Dickey, 45.

enthusiasm became very strong in the insular culture of Württemberg, where it became intertwined with indigenous mystical and Hermetic currents. Joachim's thought is not itself "Hermetic"--and it is even questionable whether it should be termed "mystical"--but it was co-opted by Hermeticists like Böhme, Andreae, Baader, and Oetinger.

As Laurence Dickey notes, Old-Württemberg belonged to the tradition of what Gerhard Ladner has called "Christian reform." Dickey writes that

This tradition . . . took ethical and eschatological elements from widely divergent sources in the history of Christian thought and formed from them an anthropology of fallen and restored man that allowed for--indeed, demanded--man's participation in civil life as well as in his own salvation. The thrust of the tradition was to show that through ethical activism man could transform the world in accordance with God's wishes and, by doing so, make significant 'progress' not only toward transcending his own fallen nature, but toward establishing the Kingdom of God on earth as well.⁷⁷

Dickey argues that Joachimism was one of the influences on Württemberg "Christian reform."⁷⁸ He notes that the

77. Ibid., 12.

78. Ibid., 34.

Württembergers viewed themselves as a "millennial people," chosen by God to realize the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.⁷⁹

Dickey writes further that the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Württemberg "constituted an age of apocalyptic expectation."⁸⁰ Nowhere was this more evident than in the pietists, but the Joachimism of the pietists appears to have been influenced by the Rosicrucian movement. The influence of Joachim on the Rosicrucian manifestoes has been discussed by a number of scholars, and J.V. Andreae himself actually mentions Joachim.⁸¹ J. Montgomery has called Andreae "the single most important influence on the church history of the Württemberg territory for over two hundred years."⁸² Phillip Jakob Spener (1635-1705), sometimes called the "father of German pietism" explicitly acknowledged his intellectual debt to Andreae.⁸³ Spener divided the history of Christianity into three ages, corresponding to the Trinity, and claimed that

79. Ibid., 36.

80. Ibid., 44.

81. See J.V. Andreae, Turris Babel sive Judiciorum de Fraternitate Rosaceae Crucis Chaos (Argentorati: Sumptibus haeredum Lazari Zetzneri, 1619), 14-15. For scholars who have noted the Joachim-Rosicrucian connection see for example, Dickey, 63-65; Roland Edighoffer, "Rosicrucianism from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Centuries," in Faivre and Needleman, 188; J. Montgomery, The Cross and the Crucible (The Hague, 1973), 57, 173, 198-99.

82. Dickey, 61; J. Montgomery, ix.

83. On the relationship of Andreae to Pietism, see R. Schneider, 36-37.

the third age would involve the "Divine Light" penetrating and dispelling darkness.⁸⁴

Perhaps the most striking example of Joachim's influence on pietism, however, is that of J.A. Bengel (1687-1752). Robert Schneider has characterized Bengel as "the philosopher of history who anticipated the work of Schelling and Hegel."⁸⁵ Bengel's maternal great-grandfather was Matthias Hafenreffer (1561-1619), chancellor of the University of Tübingen, and one of Andreae's teachers. Having lived through the wars of Louis XIV as a young boy, Bengel had seen much violence and grew up hoping for a time of perpetual peace. Unlike many such hopefuls, however, Bengel did not look for signs of progress. Instead he prophesied that corruption, violence, and blasphemy would only increase until the forces of the Antichrist burned themselves out. Bengel held that revelation was playing itself out in history by degrees. As Ernst Benz puts it, for Bengel

history is a series of alliances between God and the elect saved from the fall. This history of salvation is realized in a spiritual evolution through these alliances, until the final battle between the Kingdom of Light and the Kingdom of Darkness. In Bengel,

84. Gerald Hanratty, "Hegel and the Gnostic Tradition: II," Philosophical Studies (Ireland) 31 (1986-87): 301-25, 319.

85. R. Schneider, 38.

these suggestions become even stronger as he also wishes to see a chronological conformity between the periods. His book Weltalter, a title that one finds again, significantly enough, in Schelling, represents an attempt at a chronological fixation of the divine plan of redemptive history, with the aid of the varied numerical data from Old and New Testament prophetic books.⁸⁶

Through a complex and eccentric interpretation of the Book of Revelation, Bengel determined that the Millenium would begin in the year 1836. 1809 would mark the return of Christ and the inception of the "Kingdom of a Thousand Years" (Tausend-Jahre Reich). Benz notes that Hegel's "cunning of reason" is clearly anticipated by Bengel in his account of how this Kingdom shall come into being:

Viewed from outside, history is the place of the expansion of the private egotism of individuals and groups. Those with power act as they intend; each one wishes to attain his objective by his own action. But from the moment an act has taken place, the actor ceases to be the master of his actions. The act not only produces the repercussions its instigator

86. Ernst Benz, The Mystical Sources of German Romantic Philosophy, trans. Blair R. Reynolds and Eunice M. Paul (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1983), 35.

desired, but also has boundless and unforeseen consequences, leading to unimaginable and often completely unexpected primary and secondary results. . . . [In Bengel, this idea] is contained in a theological interpretation of history in its totality, which sees in every event, in the last analysis, an element of the divine plan of redemption.⁸⁷

Bengel and his followers, who called themselves "The Free" (Die Freien), proclaimed the perennial ideal of the "Invisible Church," a conception which is similar to Joachim's informal "community of the faithful" which was supposed to characterize the third age.⁸⁸ The "Invisible Church" is a perennial theme of German mysticism, and also an important concept for both the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians (who also spoke of an "Invisible College"). In a letter from Hegel to Schelling of January 1795, Hegel writes: "Reason and Freedom remain our watchword, and our rallying point the Invisible Church."⁸⁹ Robert Schneider holds that Hegel's use of the term "Invisible Church," as

87. Ibid., 37.

88. See Hanratty, 313.

89. Butler, 32; Hoffmeister #8. H.S. Harris writes: "It seems to me virtually certain that for Hegel, at any rate, the 'invisible Church' originally referred to the cosmopolitan ideal of Freemasonry as envisaged by Lessing in Ernst und Falk" (Harris, Toward the Sunlight, 105). Harris also seems to suggest that the "Invisible Church" should be understood as equivalent to Objective Spirit. See H.S. Harris, Hegel's Development Vol. II: Night Thoughts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 411.

well as the phrase "Kingdom of God" (see the following section) is evidence of the influence of pietist theology.⁹⁰ As we have seen, Dickey argues that the "Protestant civil piety" of Old-Württemberg involved, among other things, the goal of establishing the kingdom of God on earth through a transformation of ethics. Robert Schneider, in fact, refers to the "kingdom of God" (Das Königreich Gottes) as the "consummate idea" of Swabian pietism.⁹¹ In addition to Bengel, P.M. Hahn also preached a doctrine of the "Invisible Church."

Hahn was a follower of Oetinger. It is through Böhme and Oetinger that Joachimism and Millenarianism in general are incorporated into the Hermetic tradition, and, significantly, it is Böhme and Oetinger who are probably the chief sources of Hegel's Joachimism. F. Ernest Stoeffler makes reference to Oetinger's "rampant chiliasm," which "surpassed even that of Bengel."⁹² While Bengel had layed great stress on how we can know that the Millenium is approaching (e.g., through his theories of Biblical exegesis), Oetinger took Bengel's calculations for granted and focussed instead on precisely what the end of time would bring. The picture that Oetinger paints of the "Golden Age" at the end of time is essentially indistinguishable from utopian socialism:

90. R. Schneider, 41.

91. Ibid., 146.

92. Stoeffler, German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), 117.

In any kingdom, true happiness has three conditions [all of which will be satisfied in the Millenium]: first, that despite all multiplicity, which is not against order, and despite all differences of rank, the subjects have equality among each other, as we have learned from the distribution of Israel where the equal share of land reminded everybody not to pride himself above others. Everybody is to find his happiness in the happiness of his neighbor, his joy in the joy of all the other people, and by that everybody is to be a free lord among others; secondly, that they have a community of goods and not take delight in goods because they are a property; thirdly, that they demand nothing from each other as an obligation. Because, if everything would be available in abundance, there would be no need of government, property, and of no liabilities forced and extorted by government.⁹³

Of course, such a utopian conception is completely antithetical to the spirit of Hegel's Philosophy of Right (in the Preface to which Hegel explicitly rejects

93. Quoted in Klaus Vondung, "Millenarianism, Hermeticism, and the Search for a Universal Science," in Science, Pseudo-Science, and Utopianism in Early Modern Thought, ed. Stephen McKnight (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 122.

utopianism). Nevertheless, it must be remembered that in his youth, Hegel, like so many others of his generation, was infatuated with the utopian ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity proclaimed by the French revolutionaries. As Hegel himself discusses, it is natural for young people to be idealistic and to dream of remaking the world. It is generally assumed that Hegel's youthful idealism was awakened by the Revolution, but Ernst Benz suggests a different hypothesis: "German democratic ideas do not rest solely on the ideology of the French Revolution," Benz writes, "but find roots in the Christian conscience of Swabian pietism."⁹⁴ Benz is suggesting that the source of Hegel's idealism is the dream of the "Golden Age" of freedom and equality which he encountered in Bengelian, Oetingerite, Hahnian, and other pietist "schools." It would have been hard to have avoided encountering these currents in late eighteenth-century Stuttgart. Hegel--and Schelling and Hölderlin--responded so quickly and enthusiastically to the French Revolution because they saw in it the immanent fulfillment of ideals to which they were already committed, ideals transmitted to them by Swabian pietism.⁹⁵

94. Benz, Mystical Sources, 44.

95. Priscilla A. Hayden-Roy, in her study of the influence of Württemberg pietism on Hölderlin, writes that "Chiliastic excitement was widespread among all ranks of the Württemberg pietists at the time Hölderlin was studying at the Stift, and the French Revolution added to their conviction that they were drawing near to the fullness of time." Priscilla A. Hayden-Roy, "A Foretaste of Heaven":

Oetinger believed that at the end of time, not only would all men live in perfect harmony but science would be transformed. No longer would there be a multitude of disconnected sciences; a new "super science" would arise which would unify all knowledge. Oetinger's New Science, as we might call it, is a version of pansophia. Benz describes Oetinger's science as it will exist in his utopia: "The coming together of these gifts of the spirit occurs in a central vision exalting the faith of the Kingdom's subjects to the level of knowledge, of an intellectual intuition. They will participate in a 'central knowledge.' The description of this knowledge of the future already constitutes a direct foreshadowing of the idealistic idea of knowledge such as we find in different forms in Schelling, Hegel, and Baader."⁹⁶

Oetinger describes his New Science in the following rapturous language:

It will be very easy to understand: God will present all things in an intuitive form; and we will see his reckonings in an architectural vision, in detail and in totality, in the physical as in the moral; but above all we will have a very sharp knowledge of the history of nations. And what the Holy Revelation only

Friedrich Hölderlin in the Context of Württemberg Pietism (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 1994), 216.

96. Ibid., 40.

outlined, will be recounted in all detail, drawn out of the abyss, set beside every kind of state or constitution and seen under the righteous enlightenment of the knowledge of God, of the soul, and of the human body. There will be no more than one single basic wisdom. Jurisprudence and medicine will no longer be separable from theology; history will be the public theatre of God's ways and of all providence, of all the phrases of Solomon. . . . It will be the source of all knowledge. The law will come from theology, and medicine will be no more than an emblematic theology; we will see in souls and in bodies the imprint of the being from whom all things have come forth . . . 97

Aside from the claim that this knowledge will be had in "intuitive form," this passage seems almost like a prophecy of Hegel's system! As I have discussed, Hegel's philosophical project aims at a perfected form of living in the world which will transform religious life, art, our understanding of history, of science, of government--of all aspects of man and his world. Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of History can be seen as an attempt to make good on Oetinger's prediction that the New Science would involve an understanding of the divine in history, an

97. Oetinger, Sämtliche Schriften, ed. Karl Chr. Eberh. Ehmann (Stuttgart, 1858-64), Vol. 6, 47.

attempt to show that "history [is] the public theatre of God's ways and of all providence." For Hegel as for Oetinger, all science and philosophy becomes identical with theology. Hegel takes up "what the Holy Revelation only outlined," the Triune structure of the divine; he "recounts it in all detail" and "sets [it] beside every kind of state or constitution," in order that we may "see in souls and in bodies the imprint of the being from whom all things have come forth."

While the evidence for the influence of Bengel and Oetinger on Hegel's thought is strong, it is beyond doubt in the case of Schelling. Schelling describes history as a "successively developing revelation of God."⁹⁸ In Die Weltalter Schelling states that "The peace of the Golden Age [das Goldne Zeitalter] will be made known first through the harmonious unification of all sciences."⁹⁹ In his System of Transcendental Idealism (1800), Schelling sets forth what he calls "the only true interpretation of history":

Taken as a whole, history is a continual and progressive revelation of the Absolute. We are never able, then, to determine the precise point in the

98. "Philosophie und Religion" (1804), Werke, ed. Manfred Schröter (München: C.H. Beck, 1927), Vol. 4, 47.

99. Die Weltalter (1813), Werke, 4:582. This and the preceding line from Schelling's "Philosophie und Religion" are quoted and discussed in Klaus Vondung, 124.

course of history where the stamp of Providence or God Himself becomes visible, so to speak. For God never is, if He is called upon to be that which manifests itself in the objective world; if He was, we would not be; but He does not cease to reveal Himself. By His history, man furnishes a continual proof of God's existence, but a proof which only history in its totality can bring to term.¹⁰⁰

In the same work, Schelling, like Joachim and his followers, divides history into three epochs, maintaining that in the third epoch God is finally "actualized."

4. Hegel and Prussian Rosicrucianism

The major difference between Hegel and the Swabian millennialists is that Hegel believes the end of time has already arrived. Indeed if it were not already finished we could not know it (this is the point of the famous "Owl of Minerva" metaphor). To be sure, Hegel's theory of history is similar to Joachim's in being trinitarian, but unlike Joachim Hegel does not employ the Trinity as a device for making predictions about the future, he merely uses it to make sense of the past (Marx, not Hegel, is the true modern disciple of Joachim).

100. Quoted in Benz, Mystical Sources, 28.

It was in Berlin that Hegel lectured on his philosophy of history, and in Berlin that he published his Philosophy of Right. Hegel came to Berlin in 1818, after having taught for just two years at Heidelberg. This was the crowning moment of his career, and he remained in Berlin until his death on November 14, 1831. The call to Berlin was a recognition of Hegel's importance as a thinker. In Berlin Hegel was a celebrity and commanded considerable influence. His lectures were attended by hundreds from all walks of life: undergraduates, colleagues from other disciplines, "veterinary surgeons, insurance brokers, civil servants, operatic tenors and commercial clerks were rushing to his lectures."¹⁰¹ If we look at Hegel's interests during the Berlin period it is clear that he viewed his new post as a pulpit from which to proclaim the nature of the legitimate state (the Philosophy of Right), the actualization of God in the world (the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion), and the climax of the story of mankind (the Lectures on the Philosophy of World History). As I have said, Hegel was no Oetinger: he was not the herald of a new age and of utopia; he was Minerva's wise old owl proclaiming that the Kingdom of God is already spread upon the earth, and men need to see it.¹⁰²

101. Rüdiger Safranski, Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy, trans. Eswald Osers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 259.

102. My allusion is to the Gospel of Thomas, 114. See The Other Bible, ed. Willis Barnstone (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), 307.

In the Preface to the Philosophy of Right Hegel attacks utopianism, at one point employing a now-famous metaphor: "To recognize reason as the rose in the cross of the present and thereby to enjoy the present, this is the rational insight which reconciles us to the actual" (Knox, 12; PR p. 27). In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion of 1824, Hegel employs the same metaphor: "in order to pluck reason, the rose in the cross of the present, one must take up the cross itself" (LPR II, 248n45).

Such commentators as Knox, Löwith, Lasson, Hodgson, and Wood agree in attributing Hegel's metaphor to the Rosicrucians.¹⁰³ Oddly, however, none of them shows how this connection throws any light on Hegel's teaching. Löwith suggests that Hegel is not only referring to the Rosicrucians but also to a device originated by Luther.¹⁰⁴ The problem with this suggestion is that Luther's device is a cross in a heart in a white rose, not a rose in a cross.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, in a review essay published in 1829, Hegel himself identifies the reference as being to the Rosicrucians (der Rosenkreutzer) and suggests that only

103. Knox, 303 n34; Löwith, Hegel to Nietzsche, 18; Hodgson, LPR II, 248 n45.; Allen Wood, editorial note in G.W.F. Hegel, Elements of the Philosophy of Right, ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 391, n27.

104. Löwith, Hegel to Nietzsche, 18-19.

105. One is tempted to think that this implausible hypothesis has suggested itself to scholars simply because they are on more familiar territory dealing with Luther.

"ignorance" (Unwissenheit) could explain someone's failure to recognize the allusion.¹⁰⁶ He says nothing about Luther.

Earlier in the Preface, Hegel draws an interesting contrast between people's attitude toward nature and their attitude toward the ethical world. "So far as nature is concerned people grant that it is nature as it is which philosophy has to bring within its ken, that the philosopher's stone [der Stein der Weisen] lies concealed somewhere within nature itself, that nature is inherently rational, and that what knowledge has to investigate and grasp in concepts is this actual reason present in it . . . in the sense of the law and essence immanent within it" (Knox, 4; PR p. 16). As we have seen from the use of the "rose in the cross" image in the Lectures, the rose represents reason. Since Hegel uses the philosopher's stone to represent the reason inherent in nature and society, the philosopher's stone is obviously equivalent to the rose in the cross. Given the reputation of the Rosicrucians as alchemists, the equivalency of these two metaphors cannot have escaped Hegel. There is thus an alchemical-Rosicrucian metaphorical subtext operating throughout the Preface. Hegel is again playing the role of "world-historical alchemist": having isolated the

106. "Über die Hegelsche Lehre oder absolutes Wissen und moderner Pantheismus.--Über Philosophie überhaupt und Hegels Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften insbesondere," (1829), in Werke 11, 466.

philosopher's stone (reason) in the realm of nature, he now turns to the ethical world and proposes--against the doxa of his time--to carry out a similar operation there, to find the philosopher's stone in what is. Recall from Chapter Four that the stone is the most exalted, yet at the same time the most common thing there is, "trodden underfoot in the street." He finds it, as the rose in the cross of the present: as the reason which rises up from the Golgotha of Spirit, but only in the crucible of his philosophy of history.

Why does Hegel place a clear and publicly acknowledged reference to the Rosicrucians in the Preface to the Philosophy of Right? In Chapter Two I quoted Heinrich Schneider as saying that the Rosicrucians "declared that the unification with God was demonstrable and possible already on earth. For that demonstration they were leaning upon a modification of enlightened natural philosophy which upheld that nature in its teleological structure was a gradual revelation of God."¹⁰⁷ The Rosicrucian movement is alleged to have involved members of many different religious denominations.¹⁰⁸ The Rosicrucians held a doctrine of prisca theologia, the position that there is one true, trans-denominational, trans-cultural theology or

107. Heinrich Schneider, Quest for Mysteries: The Masonic Background for Literature in Eighteenth-Century Germany (Ithaca: Cornell, 1947), 45.

108. Frances Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment (London: Routledge and Kegan-Paul, 1972), 98.

account of divine being, revealed by God to man in the remote past. They believed that if this ancient wisdom could be recovered it would unify the world's religions.¹⁰⁹

The problem with attempting to find "Rosicrucianism" in Hegel, however, is that the Rosicrucian manifestoes announced the aim of a "General Reformation of the Entire World." As I have discussed, Hegel's aims are not so grandiose, and--as I shall argue shortly--his general orientation can be called conservative. There is more to the Rosicrucian saga than has been discussed thus far, however. Some time in the latter half of the eighteenth century the Rosicrucian movement was revived in Germany. There is disagreement about exactly when this took place--some say 1757, some 1777, others give a different date entirely. By the late eighteenth century, however, the Rosicrucians were anything but reformers. The new incarnation of the Rosicrucian brotherhood, christened the "Gold and Rosy-Cross" (Gold-und Rosenkreuzer) was a conservative organization, consciously created as a secret weapon to combat the influence of the liberal Freemasons and Illuminati, who were advocates of Enlightenment.¹¹⁰

109. Allison Coudert, Leibniz and the Kabbalah (Boston: Kluwer, 1995), 8.

110. Klaus Epstein, The Genesis of German Conservatism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 105; see also Heinrich Schneider, 76-77. Epstein includes a long list of secondary sources for the Gold-und Rosenkreuzer (105).

Klaus Epstein describes the new Rosicrucian movement as follows:

The Rosicrucians resembled their Illuminati enemies in being obviously influenced by the Strict Observance Masonry which flourished during the same decades. They developed a similarly fanciful genealogy and an elaborate hierarchy of degrees. . . . There were nine specifically Rosicrucian degrees: the juniores, theoretici, practici, philosophi, minores, maiores, adepti, magistri, and magi. Elaborate initiation ceremonies were used to mark passage from one to another. The order met in circles (Zirkel) composed of a maximum of nine members . . . The work of the Zirkel consisted of reading theosophical books, making chemical experiments, and discussing common problems. Several Zirkel were placed under the control of an Oberhauptdirektor. The highest officials were several Grosspriors, the Vizegeneral, and the Magus, though nothing is definitely known about the mode of operation, or even the existence, of the top echelons of the Rosicrucian Order.¹¹¹

Oetinger was a member of the Gold and Rosy-Cross, as was Mesmer. Like both men, the order itself was opposed to

111. Epstein, 106-7. See Figure 16 for a typical example of the Gold and Rosy-Cross's alchemical-Kabbalistic lore.

the rationalism of the Enlightenment. It was dedicated to combatting rationalist attempts to "reform" religion, to "re-educate" the people, and to re-shape or overthrow the state. The new Rosicrucians saw themselves as defenders of the faith and of public order, as the following quote from one of their number clearly indicates: "It is one of our foremost duties to serve the state into which we have been placed by Providence--to serve it with all our power and capacity. We must be obedient and loyal to the higher powers ordained by God, and help to promote the public good even when it violates our private egotism."¹¹² Given that governmental authorities and the nobility in Germany were, for the most part, hostile to the Enlightenment the Gold and Rosy-Cross was able to gain considerable influence among the powerful.

By far the most dramatic example of their influence was during the reign of Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia (1786-97). Friedrich Wilhelm was the nephew and successor of Friedrich der Grosser, who had reigned for forty-six years. Whereas his uncle was an "enlightened" despot, interested in science, unmoved by superstition and open to using the power of the state to effect limited reforms, Friedrich Wilhelm was a mystic and an opponent of Enlightenment. He was reputed to have visions, hear

¹¹². Quoted in Ibid., 110.

ghostly voices, and hold the occasional seance.¹¹³

Friedrich the Great had been a mason, initiated into the order as a young man. During his reign the number of lodges in Berlin increased to thirteen. Friedrich himself was Grand Master of a lodge called "At the Sign of the Three Globes."¹¹⁴ Like his uncle, Friedrich Wilhelm had also been a Mason, but the order's emphasis on rationalism, and its merely decorative mystification did not satisfy him.

During Prussia's so-called "Potato War" against Austria in 1778, Friedrich Wilhelm encountered an officer in his uncle's army by the name of Johann Rudolf von Bischoffwerder (1741-1803). Bischoffwerder, a Saxon by birth, had also flirted with Masonry, but his burning desire was to be initiated into the secrets of alchemy, a desire the Masons could not satisfy. On Christmas Eve, 1779 he was initiated into a Rosicrucian lodge, where he apparently found more of what he was looking for. Bischoffwerder is known to have been conversant with Kabbalistic, as well as alchemical writings.¹¹⁵ In 1780, learning of Bischoffwerder's friendship with the prince, Duke Friedrich August of Braunschweig-Öls, the chief of the Berlin Gold and Rosy-Cross, ordered him to entice Friedrich

113. See Henri Brunschwig, Enlightenment and Romanticism in Eighteenth-Century Prussia, trans. Frank Jellinek (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 165; Epstein, 353.

114. Brunschwig, 185.

115. Epstein, 354.

Wilhelm into joining their ranks. In the meantime, the prince had suffered an illness and Bischoffwerder had nursed him back to health, apparently using a mysterious elixir originating with the Rosicrucian brotherhood.¹¹⁶ Whether or not the elixir had any real effect cannot, of course, be known, but the prince was convinced of its efficacy. Grateful to Bischoffwerder and full of mystical enthusiasm, Friedrich-Wilhelm entered the Rosicrucian order on August 8, 1781, and was given the secret name Brother Ormesus Magnus.

Presiding at the prince's initiation ceremony was the lodge's founder, Johann Christoph Wöllner (1732-1800). Klaus Epstein has described Wöllner and Bischoffwerder, who were close allies, as "the first self-consciously Conservative politicians in German history, politicians in the honorable sense of the term--men eager for power for the sake of implementing their principles."¹¹⁷ That is to say, they were the first German politicians whose policies involved a conscious commitment to rolling back the forces of liberalism. Wöllner, the son of a Lutheran pastor, had married into the Prussian nobility over the objections of King Friedrich, who refused to grant him a title. He became a Mason in 1765, and rose quickly in the ranks to become a Knight of the Strict Observance (a rank associated

116. Gilbert Stanhope, A Mystic on the Prussian Throne (London: Mills and Boon, 1912), 124.

117. Epstein, 354.

with the alleged link between the Masons and the Knights Templar) in 1776. Like Bischoffwerder, however, he became disillusioned with the Masons and joined the Rosicrucians in 1779, where he also attained a position of considerable authority, serving as Oberhauptdirektor over twenty-six Zirkel.¹¹⁸ In the years leading up to Fredrich Wilhelm's coronation in 1786, Wöllner and Bischoffwerder worked hard to win the prince over to their mystical philosophy and conservative politics, which was not difficult. Wöllner was not, however, a mere reactionary, a supporter of the status quo; his brand of conservatism was a thoughtful one, advocating some much needed reforms (particularly in economics), while resisting the individualism and laissez-faire of French, British and American advocates of Enlightenment. As described by Epstein, Wöllner's views sound, in fact, much like those of Hegel:

He wanted to liberalize mercantilist policies by promoting free trade and abandoning royal monopolies in accordance with the teachings of Adam Smith and the Physiocrats. Wöllner did not, however, advocate complete laissez-faire but favored a truly Conservative paternalist social policy: the state must protect the worker against the profit drive of "manufacturers with immoral souls," a group just

118. Ibid., 357.

emerging in Prussia at that time. He saw the obsolescence of serfdom, and favored the creation of peasant proprietors on royal domains and church lands twenty years before Stein's reforms; he even contemplated the breakup of Junker estates in favor of the peasantry.¹¹⁹

Wöllner's ambition was to succeed the famous Karl Abraham Zedlitz, the Prussian Minister of Culture. He succeeded in this on July 3, 1788, when Friedrich Wilhelm, who had ascended the throne in Summer 1786, appointed him Staats- und Justiz-Minister and Chef des Geistlichen Departements (Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs).¹²⁰ While Wöllner's economic policy may have been progressive, he was a zealous defender of the traditional faith against the rationalists. On March 18, 1786 he wrote to Bischoffwerder that his chief aim in life was "to become an unworthy instrument in the hands of Ormesus, to save millions of souls from perdition and to lead the entire country back to faith in Jesus Christ."¹²¹ On July 9, 1788, just six days after acquiring his post, Wöllner persuaded the King to enact the "Edict Concerning Religion," which commanded orthodoxy of the clergy. The

119. Ibid., 358.

120. Ibid., 361.

121. Quoted in Epstein, 361.

"Edict of Censorship" of December 19, 1788 suppressed writings considered to be atheistic or otherwise impious.

In 1792, Wöllner's office published the Landeskatechismus which defined what orthodoxy consisted in and proscribed all rationalist approaches to "reforming" religious practice or to "interpreting" scripture. Wöllner is famous for his censorship of Kant's Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone (1793). He seems to have reserved mysticism--itself a form of heterodoxy--for himself and his Rosicrucian brothers (hence his support of the traditional faith emerges as, at least partly, a Platonic facade of "noble lies"). Gilbert Stanhope quotes Wöllner as addressing his Order thusly: "Oh my brethren! The time is not far off when we may hope that the long-expected Wise Ones from the East will teach us and bring us into communion with High and Invisible Beings."¹²²

In 1797, the plans of Wöllner and Bischoffwerder were abruptly crushed by the death of the King and the ascension to the throne of his son, Friedrich Wilhelm III. The son had none of the father's mystical fervor or Rosicrucian connections. He was no rationalist either, but, by all accounts, merely a dullard without any convictions of his own. He reigned for forty-three years. The rationalists who had laid low during Friedrich Wilhelm II's reign saw their chance: they filled up the vacuum that was Friedrich

¹²². Stanhope, 131.

Wilhelm III, persuaded him to purge the Rosicrucians from the cabinet and to cancel many of the measures enacted by Wöllner and company.¹²³ Wöllner and Bischoffwerder retired into private life and died in obscurity.

This is the historical context required to understand what a reference to the "rose in the cross of the present" would have meant to readers--including the censors--in 1821. Some Hegel scholars recognize this, but their treatment of the historical materials has, in some cases, been surprisingly inadequate. For instance, Kenneth Westphal thinks that Hegel's reference to the "rose in the cross of the present" is a message to "the superstitious and reactionary king, Friedrich Wilhelm III." Westphal informs us that "The king belonged to the Rosicrucians, an anti-scientific cabalistic Christian sect devoted to the occult . . . "¹²⁴ Thus, Hegel is denouncing the "other-worldliness" of the Rosicrucian King, telling him he must recognize the rose in the cross of the present.¹²⁵ The only problem with this, of course, is that Westphal has his Friedrich-Wilhelm's wrong: when Hegel published the Philosophy of Right in 1821, the Rosicrucians had been out of power for twenty-four years! Westphal would make Hegel a liberal Don Quixote, dueling with non-existent

123. There were some Rosicrucian holdovers, however, such as Count Kurt von Haugwitz, who was an influence on Goethe (see Chapter Three) and could quite possibly have befriended Hegel in Berlin. See Epstein, 391.

124. Westphal, 238.

125. Ibid., 239.

Rosicrucian villains, much like the American religious fundamentalists in America who see the Illuminati lurking in every corner. A further problem with Westphal's thesis is that with respect to their political views, the Rosicrucians were not "other-worldly": in fact, they espoused the very sort of anti-utopianism Hegel articulates in his Preface.

The same blurring of historical distinctions occurs in a monograph on the Preface by Adriaan Peperzak. Referring to the "rose in the cross of the present," Peperzak writes:

In a veiled manner . . . Hegel could be understood here to be directing himself to the king and his reactionary advisers with the message that true philosophy . . . does precisely what they wish: it legitimizes the reconciliation and satisfaction with the existing political reality by showing that it is as beautiful as a rose--in spite of its painful aspects. The fact that Hegel is not on their side, however, but on the side of the modern, post-Napoleonic legal state . . . choosing in favor of enlightened ministers such as Herdenberg and Altenstein, is clear from the main text of the Philosophy of Right, but not from the Preface. This lack of clarity and the appearance of agreement with

the Rosicrucians among the politicians are tricks employed in Hegel's rhetoric.¹²⁶

But again, the Rosicrucians were simply not a political force in Prussia in 1821. Hegel would have gained nothing by the "rhetorical trick" of "appearing to agree with the Rosicrucians"--far from it, in fact, since it was the reigning King who had long ago purged his government of Rosicrucian influence. Further, as I have shown, the Rosicrucians were not "paleo-conservatives," blindly reacting to all change and opposing all reform. Indeed some of the reforms planned by Wöllner anticipated those enacted by the "enlightened ministers" of Friedrich Wilhelm III. Moreover, many of the "reactionary" views of the Rosicrucians were shared by Hegel. For instance, Hegel opposed forces that would undermine traditional religion, particularly irreligious philosophies; he held that all citizens ought to be required to belong to a religion; he held that it is the "supreme duty" of citizens to belong to the state, etc. To be sure, Hegel is more liberal than Wöllner, et al: he does believe in some freedom of religion, and advocates greater freedom of expression than did the Rosicrucian brothers, but his sentiments are decidedly paternalistic, pro-religious, pro-tradition, and

126. Adriaan Th. Peperzak, Philosophy and Politics: A Commentary on the Preface to Hegel's Philosophy of Right (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 109; my italics.

anti-individualistic. (The claim that conservatism means opposition to all reforms, including conservative ones, is simply a caricature and a canard.)

Peperzak claims that Hegel only "appears" to agree with the Rosicrucians in their opposition to utopianism and their advocacy of the conservative view that society as it is, warts and all, is at bottom "rational" and cannot and should not be otherwise. Given that Hegel had nothing to gain from merely appearing to agree with the Rosicrucians, we must conclude that he really does agree with them.

Thus, Hegel's metaphor of the "rose in the cross of the present" is hardly a bone thrown to the King's censors, but rather a daring move: an expression of sympathy with the discredited advisors of the previous monarch.

My claim hinges, of course, on whether or not Hegel's metaphor of the "rose in the cross of the present" really is an expression of conservatism. The metaphor can only be interpreted in the light of a full understanding of its context--a full and adequate understanding of Hegel's political attitudes in 1821. Therefore, before exploring the implications of Hegel's apparent sympathy with the Rosicrucians, it is necessary to deal with some further questions about Hegel's political sympathies.

I take conservatism to involve the view that historical institutions have an unplanned, systemic rationality to them, which we have a very limited ability

to understand, reform or replace. The error of liberalism, from the standpoint of the conservative, is in thinking that we can replace the products of history with the products our own minds; that whatever has come about as a result of unplanned, historical evolution must be "irrational" and can and should be replaced by something devised by reason. This is basically a description of the political philosophy of Edmund Burke, who I take to be a paradigmatic conservative. Do we find such views expressed in Hegel's Philosophy of Right?

In the Preface, Hegel attacks the idea that "freedom of thought" must express itself "only in divergence from, indeed in hostility to, what is publicly recognized" (Knox, 4; PR p. 16). Those who take such an attitude believe that the task of political philosophy is to overturn or challenge what exists in favor of the ideal. According to Hegel, such a view is profoundly ahistorical and naive; it supposes that because what has hitherto passed for society has not been the result of deliberate, "rational" planning or design it must therefore be "irrational" and in need of either serious revision or outright destruction. Operating with this presupposition, certain individuals believe that the world is theirs to remake. Hegel writes: "In examining this idea and the activity in conformity with it, one might suppose that no state or constitution had ever existed in the world at all or was even in being at the present time,

but that nowadays--and this 'nowadays' lasts forever--we had to start all over again from the beginning, and that the ethical world had just been waiting for such projects, proofs, and investigations" (Ibid.).

As I have already mentioned, Hegel goes on to draw an interesting contrast between people's attitude toward nature and their attitude toward the ethical world. They hold that it is the task of Philosophy of Nature to describe nature as it is, but political philosophy, they insist, must describe the political "as it ought to be." Unlike nature, they hold that the ethical-political realm is "God-forsaken." Hegel, by contrast, holds that the ethical world is an expression of God on earth, hence it is not only foolish but impious to "negate" the ethical world as it is and to hold out for what the individual, finite mind insists "ought to be."

In defending his approach to the ethical world, Hegel states that "since philosophy is the exploration of the rational, it is for that very reason the apprehension of the present and the actual, not the erection of a beyond, supposed to exist, God knows where, or rather which exists, and we can perfectly well say where, namely in the error of a one-sided, empty ratiocination" (Knox, 10; PR p. 25). At the beginning of the next passage, Hegel states his famous (or, rather, infamous) equation: "What is rational is actual and what is actual is rational" (Was vernünftig ist,

das ist wirklich; und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig;
Ibid.). Hegel remarks that "the great thing is to
 apprehend in the show of the temporal and transient the
 substance which is immanent and the eternal which is
 present" (Ibid.). Hegel recognizes that the world
 contains imperfections, but the irrational and the bad are
 the ground against which the figure of the rational and the
 good has displayed itself. We must "will" or "affirm" the
 past and all its horrors--even the remnants of these
 horrors that may linger--because it is only through this
 past that present goods have come to be. In short, Hegel
 clearly appears to meet the criteria for conservatism I
 have laid out: he upholds the essential soundness of
 historically-evolved institutions and opposes rationalistic
 and idealistic efforts to remake society and its
 institutions.

It has been charged, of course, that Hegel's
 conservatism is disingenuous, that he "sold out" his
 youthful ideals when he finally achieved his career goals
 in Berlin. What lends credence to this latter contention
 is that Hegel's early views were more liberal (e.g. in the
Realphilosophie manuscript). Bernard Yack writes that
 "Hegel's account of freedom realized [in the Philosophy of
Right] abandons almost all the hopes that he and the
 rebellious generation of the 1790's attached to the left

Kantian project."¹²⁷ Of course, the claim that Hegel "sold out" presupposes that Hegel could not have abandoned liberalism honestly, as if an intellectually honest conversion to conservatism is simply inconceivable.

There is ample evidence, however, that Hegel thought that growing from youthful liberalism to a mature conservatism is an entirely natural course of events. In the Philosophy of Spirit, Hegel includes a discussion of the stages of man's life. In his discussion of the adolescent stage, Hegel states that "The content of the ideal [which has a more or less subjective shape] infuses the youth with the feeling of the power to act, and he imagines himself to be called to and capable of reshaping the world, or at least of righting that part of it that he considers to be out of joint. The visionary spirit of the youth is unaware that the essence of the substantial universal contained within his ideal [i.e., the Absolute, from which he has "abstracted" his ideal] has already achieved development and actualization within the world." Hegel then points out that "Through this idealistic tendency, the youth gives apparent evidence of a nobler attitude of mind and of greater disinterestedness than the man, concerned as the man is with his particular, temporal interests." "At first," Hegel writes, "the transition from his ideal life into civil society [bürgerliche

127. Bernard Yack, The Longing for Total Revolution (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 210.

Gesellschaft; literally "Bourgeois Society"] can seem to the youth to be a painful shift into philistinism" (PS § 396, Z; Petry II, 117).

What Hegel is of course referring to is the perennial charge of the idealistic adolescent that his elders have "sold out," and that going out in the real world (especially the business world) means "selling out." What the youth does not realize, of course, is that his position of dependency allows him the luxury of dreaming of the ideal without having to directly confront the real. Once he has gone out into the world he will find out that he has much less time to dream, because practical affairs will become his primary concern. Furthermore, insofar as he has the opportunity to try to realize his dreams, he will find that reality is not nearly so malleable as he had imagined it to be. Thus the "disillusionment" of the man is not an abandonment of worthy ideals, but a recognition that those ideals were unrealistic and empty. (Some individuals never come to terms with this sad fact, and thus remain perpetual adolescents.)

Hegel writes that

If, therefore, the man does not want to perish, he has to recognize the world as being independent, as being essentially complete. He has to accept the conditions with which it presents him, and to wrest from its

intractability what he wants for himself. . . . What is rational, divine, possesses the absolute power of actualizing itself, and has always consummated itself; it is not so impotent that it would have to wait for its actualization. The world is this actualization of divine reason; the predominance of the play of irrational accidents is only on its surface [PS § 396, Z; Petry II, 119].

In short, Hegel is claiming that maturity consists in recognizing reason as the "rose in the cross of the present"; maturity consists in recognizing that society as it is, in its basic structure, is the condition for the possibility of freedom. This is, of course, an expression of the social and political viewpoint of the Philosophy of Right.

Hegel is not saying that the abandonment of youthful ideals is a pragmatic move, necessary for getting along in the world. Disillusionment is the adoption of higher and truer ideals, the ability to see the divine, and the necessary, in what is. Hegel writes that "The world has therefore at least as much and perhaps more right to the pretension of being regarded as complete and independent as the individual entering upon manhood" (Ibid.). The youth tends to regard himself as completely independent of the world, and his own ideals as having more substance than the

reality that he rejects. "Consequently," Hegel writes, "the man is acting completely rationally when he gives up the plan of entirely reshaping the world, and confines his attempt to actualize his personal objectives, passions and interests, to joining in with it" (PS § 396, Z; Petry II, 121). Hegel states that although the world is complete, it is not dead; it is alive, ever renewing itself. The task of the man (the mature adult, that is) consists precisely in being the life of the world; joining in in such a way as to bring forth the world anew (e.g., in marrying and having children), preserving in the process the basic forms that the world consists in. "The work of man consists of this conservation and bringing- forth [in dieser erhaltenden Hervorbringung], this advancing" (*Ibid.*). This is as clear a statement as one could want of the fundamental conservatism of Hegel's position. Change--even progress--does occur, but only on a "vast scale" and not with respect to the fundamental forms and relationships of Ethical Life (family-civil society-State). The ordinary individual's role in effecting this progress, furthermore, is miniscule.

Hegel rounds out his account of the stages of life with der Greis, the "old man." This seems to be an obvious self-portrait of the wise man, the philosopher standing at the end of history, and entering into the final and most satisfying stage of his life:

The old man lives without determinate interest, for he has given up hope of actualizing ideals formerly cherished, and the future seems to hold no promise at all of anything new for him. On the contrary, he regards himself as already acquainted with the universal, the essential principle of anything he might still encounter. The mind of the old man is therefore directed solely toward this universal, and to the past from which he derives his knowledge of it [for instance, he gives lectures on world history]. In thus living in recollection of what is past and of what is substantial, he loses remembrance of present details and of the arbitrary [for instance, he steps out of his shoe on the way to lecture]. . . . On the other hand his mind is correspondingly tenacious of the wise precepts of existence, and he takes it to be his duty to preach them to those who are younger [PS § 396, Z; Petry II, 123-25].

Hegel could not have written of der Greis without recalling his nickname at Tübingen, der alte Mann. (It is worth noting that this was also the well-known nickname of the Württemberg pietist J.J. Moser, a fact to which most Hegel scholars are oblivious.)

Hegel speaks of der Greis as returning, in a sense, to the standpoint of the child. He has again come to be at

peace with the world, not in the unthinking way of the child, but precisely through experience and knowledge, through having encountered the ways of the world, and followed and understood them. This is what I have identified all along as the goal of Hegelian philosophy: to reconcile us with the world; to provide us with the knowledge, the "magic words," which tell us how to "simultaneously absorb and elevate [ourselves] beyond the total energy of suffering and antithesis that has dominated the world and all forms of its development for thousands of years."¹²⁸ To recognize the rose in the cross of the present, one must first allow oneself to be crucified. These remarks from Hegel's lectures on the Encyclopedia indicate that Hegel understood his own social and political views as having evolved and matured. They indicate that Hegel evolved toward a position that was self-consciously conservative, opposed to rationalistic and utopian schemes for the remaking of society. In short, in the Encyclopedia of 1817 Hegel gives us an account of the stages of his own life, an account of the maturation of his thought. Hegel did not "sell out" his youthful idealism in order to serve the Prussian state, he merely "grew out" of it.

If this is the case, it might be objected, how are we to explain Hegel's lifelong fascination with the French Revolution? (For instance, Hegel apparently drank a toast-

¹²⁸. Rosenkranz, 141.

-a glass of red wine--each year on the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille). This is often held up--by Jacques d'Hondt and others--as evidence that Hegel remained a radical at heart. The problem with this suggestion is that it demands that we simply ignore or explain away the very strong evidence--from the Philosophy of Right, from the lecture material I have just discussed, etc.--that the mature Hegel opposed utopianism and rationalism of the sort positively epitomized by the French revolutionaries. My suggestion is that Hegel's continued interest in the Revolution was--mostly--pure sentimentalism, the equivalent of grown men still listening to the rock music of their teens. Like all men who have gone through the painful experience of having to let go their youthful ideals, Hegel could not help but look back wistfully on that period when he and his friends felt that they were living on the threshold of a new age.

My conclusion is that when, in 1821, Hegel set down his mature views on political philosophy, prefacing them with an attack on liberalism, he considered the place in which he was then working, Berlin, and found himself feeling some sympathy with the conservative Rosicrucians who had dominated the court of the previous King. As I have discussed, in Berlin Hegel allied himself with Franz von Baader, the reactionary occultist and opponent of Enlightenment. In Chapter Five I discussed Hegel's

friendly overtures to Baader in the second edition of the Encyclopedia (1827). Although it is not known whether Baader was a Rosicrucian, he seems a likely suspect. This would certainly be a strange friendship for Hegel to publicly cultivate if he wanted to distance himself from the forces of "reaction" and "obscurantism" that were still alive in Prussia.

As d'Hondt has discussed extensively, Hegel's early life was marked by numerous associations with Freemasonry. There is no evidence that Hegel ever actually became a Mason, but he was friends with many well-known Masons and, as I have discussed in Chapter Two, he employed some Masonic imagery in his writing. The Preface to the Philosophy of Right signals a shift in Hegel's "esoteric" sympathies: from the enlightenment rationalism of the German Masonic movement, to the conservatism and mysticism of the Rosicrucians.

In Chapter Two I briefly discussed Hegel's Masonic connections, including his correspondence with Schelling and Hölderlin, which is shot through with Masonic allusions. Recall Hegel's January 1795 letter to Schelling: "May the Kingdom of God come, and our hands not be idle!" The last line before Hegel's signature reads, "Reason and Freedom remain our watchword, and our rallying point the Invisible Church."¹²⁹ In later years, however,

129. Butler, 32; Hoffmeister #8.

Hegel realized that the Kingdom of God had already come. There was thus no need for busy hands, or for a rallying point. If we juxtapose these remarks from 1795 with Hegel's "rose in the cross of the present" of 1821, it is apparent that Hegel has, in effect, switched allegiances from the ideals of the radical, reforming Masons to those of the conservative Rosicrucians.¹³⁰

The possibility that Hegel might actually have belonged to the Rosicrucians, or some other mystical sect, is tantalizing but, at present, devoid of proof. Nevertheless, in the sense in which Frances A. Yates uses the term, Hegel is a Rosicrucian. Yates writes that "I should like to try to persuade sensible people and sensible historians to use the word 'Rosicrucian'. . . . The word could, I suggest, be used of a certain style of thinking which is historically recognizable without raising the question of whether a Rosicrucian style of thinker belonged to a secret society."¹³¹

130. In his Lectures on the History of Philosophy of 1805, Hegel bitterly dismisses Freemasonry: "Just as the Freemasons have symbols which are esteemed for their depth of wisdom--depth as a brook is deep when one cannot see the bottom--that which is hidden very easily seems to men deep, or as if the depth were concealed beneath. But when it is hidden, it may possibly prove to be the case that there is nothing behind. This is so in Freemasonry, in which everything is concealed to those outside and also to many people within, and where nothing remarkable is possessed in learning or in science, and least of all in philosophy" (LHP I, 89; Werke 18, 110).

131. Frances A. Yates, "The Hermetic Tradition in Renaissance Science," in Art, Science, and History in the Renaissance, ed. Charles S. Singleton (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), 263.

In his Enlightenment and Romanticism in Eighteenth-Century Prussia, Henri Brunschwig discusses a certain character type prevalent in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Germany: men who hunger after wisdom, particularly esoteric or wisdom or forbidden ideas, and who are consequently attracted to "secret societies" like the Masons. They are disillusioned, inevitably, by the Masons, whose "mysteries" prove non-existent. Brunschwig writes that such men

believe that even if the lodges do not possess the secrets, that is no proof that the mystery does not exist. So they set to work in isolation. They read Jakob Böhme or Franz von Baader; they listen to Baron Eckhartshausen and Jung-Stilling in his old age, high priests who wrangle over each other's followers. They canvass such recent scientific discoveries as electricity, magnetism, and oxygen and combine experiments with them with the ideas of the ancient mystics in new systems based on a popularization of theosophy.¹³²

This is a perfect description of the sort of men who identified themselves as "Rosicrucians," and--aside from

132. Henri Brunschwig, Enlightenment and Romanticism in Eighteenth-Century Prussia, trans. Frank Jellinek (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 187.

the interest in Eckartshausen and Jung-Stilling--it is a perfect description of Hegel.

* * *

The purpose of this study has not been to suggest that we should throw out the traditional understanding of Hegel as responding in his system to Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. Clearly, Hegel could not have been Hegel without the decisive influence of his German idealist predecessors. My intention has merely been to suggest that there was yet another influence, the full story of which has hitherto gone untold: the influence of the Hermetic countertradition. I have shown that Hegel, in true Rosicrucian fashion, believed in the philosophia perennis and in "universal science" or pansophia. I have shown how deeply Hegel was influenced by Böhme, by Oetinger, and by the Lurianic Kabbalah; how he employed alchemical terminology and metaphors in his writings and lectures; how he involved himself in the study of "pseudo sciences" such as mesmerism; how he philosophized by means of "correspondences" and symbolic forms pregnant with Hermetic significance; how he encoded a Böhmean subtext into his Phenomenology of Spirit; how he suppressed his peculiar, Hermetic "Aether doctrine"; how he believed in the anima mundi; how he professed a Joachim-inspired theory of

history; and how he prepared diagrams containing astrological and alchemical symbolism.

Furthermore, Hegel's Hermeticism was far from being an aberration of youth. I have shown that Hegel became more interested in Hermeticism and mysticism and more willing to publicly acknowledge his debts to them as he grew older. In the winter of 1823-4 Hegel studied Eckhart with Baader and subsequently produced a lecture on religion which Baader took to be a statement of Eckhartian mysticism. The Preface to the 1827 edition of the Encyclopedia makes several references to Böhme and holds out the hope of a rapprochement between Hegel's views and Baader's. The 1832 edition of the Science of Logic inserts a remark on Böhme into the section on Qualität. The Preface to the same edition of the Logic has Hegel referring to the Logic as "supernatural" (Übernatürliche). The Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion of 1827 introduce a doctrine of the "immanent trinity" clearly inspired by Böhme's initial triad of "source-spirits." The 1831 Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion employ Joachimite terminology to speak of the Trinity. The Preface to the Philosophy of Right includes a reference to the philosopher's stone. Finally, Hegel marks himself as a crypto-Rosicrucian in the same text with his metaphor of the "rose in the cross of the present."

The Hermetic tradition was clearly not the only influence on Hegel, but it is an influence the importance of which can no longer be ignored.

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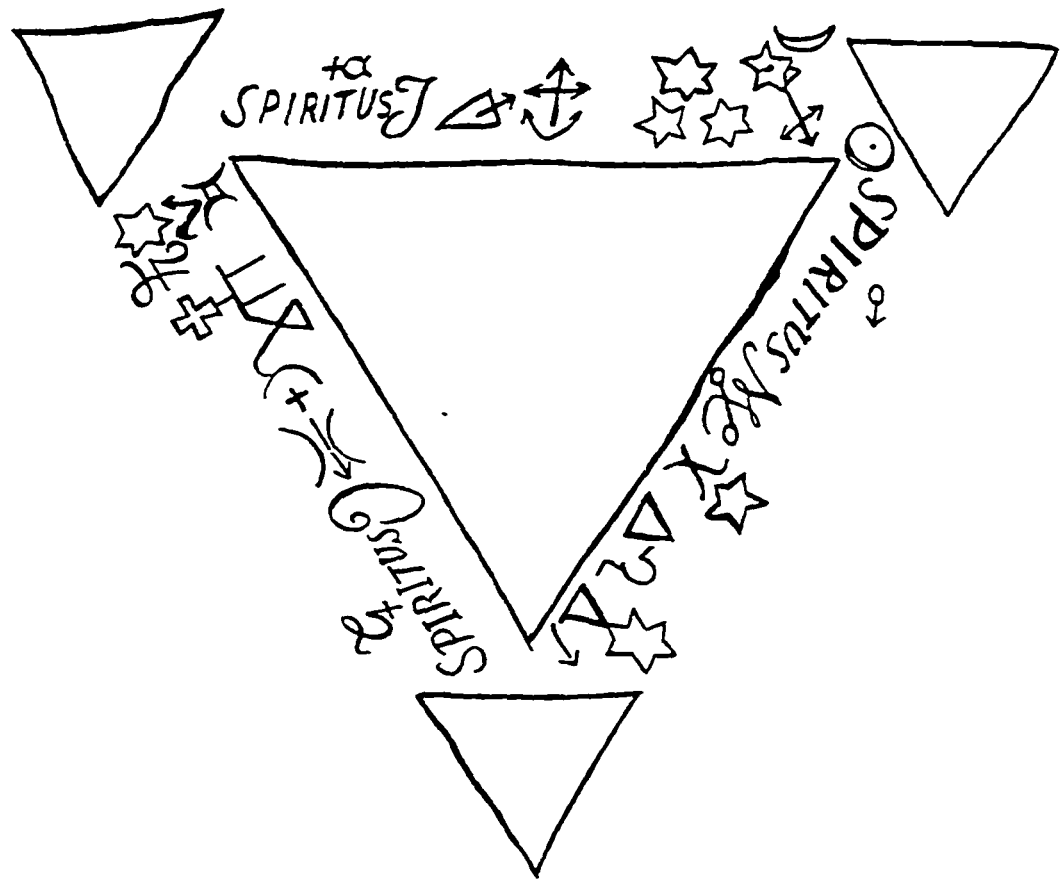
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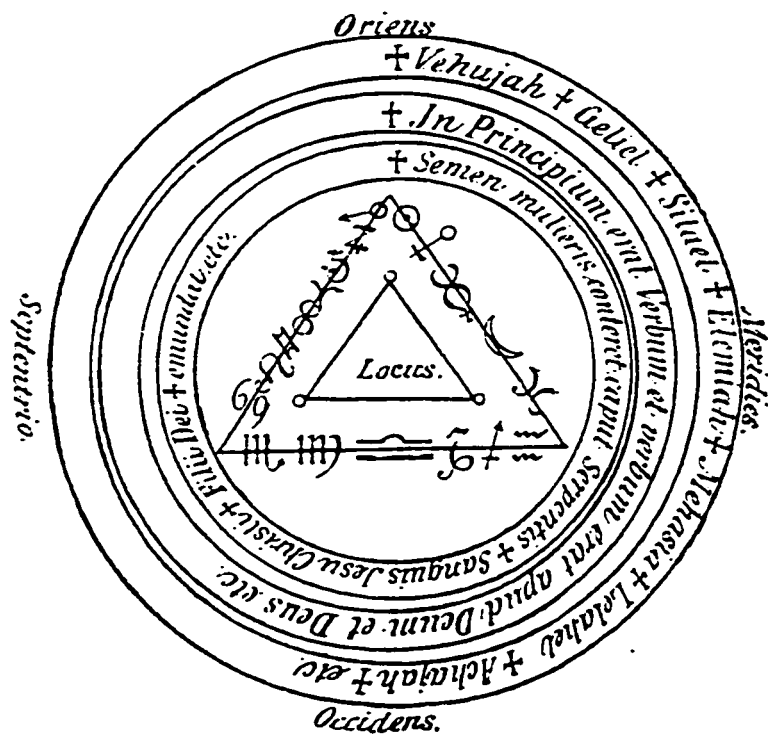
1. Hegel's Triangle Diagram

2. Key to Triangle Diagram

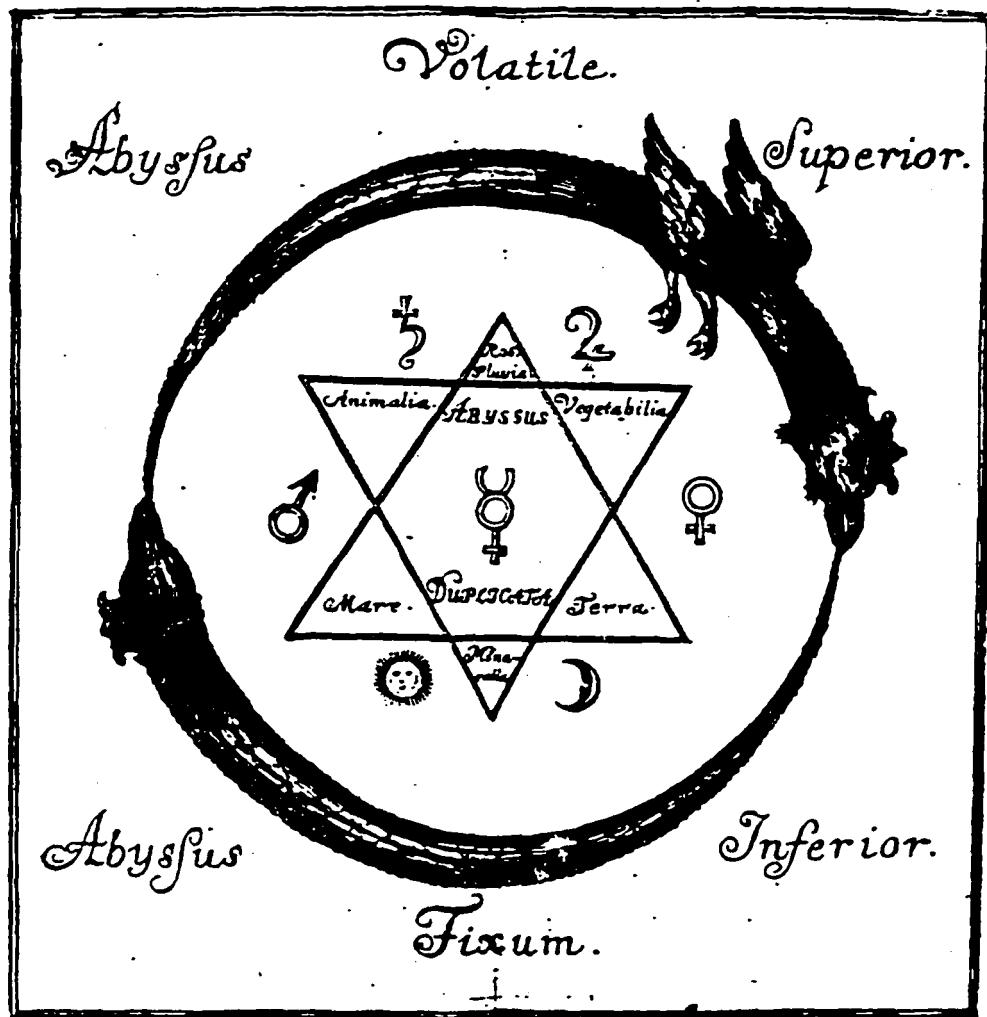
	Saturn		Mercury		Virgo
	Leo		Capricorn (Agrippa)		Caput Mortuum
	Sagittarius		Sulphur		Mercury (Agrippa)
	Gold (?)		?		5-point Star
	Potash/ Antimony		?		6-point Star
					Triangle
	Jupiter		Moon		
	?		Sun		
	Pisces		Mars		

Source: Gettings, Fred. Dictionary of Occult, Hermetic and Alchemical Sigils. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981.

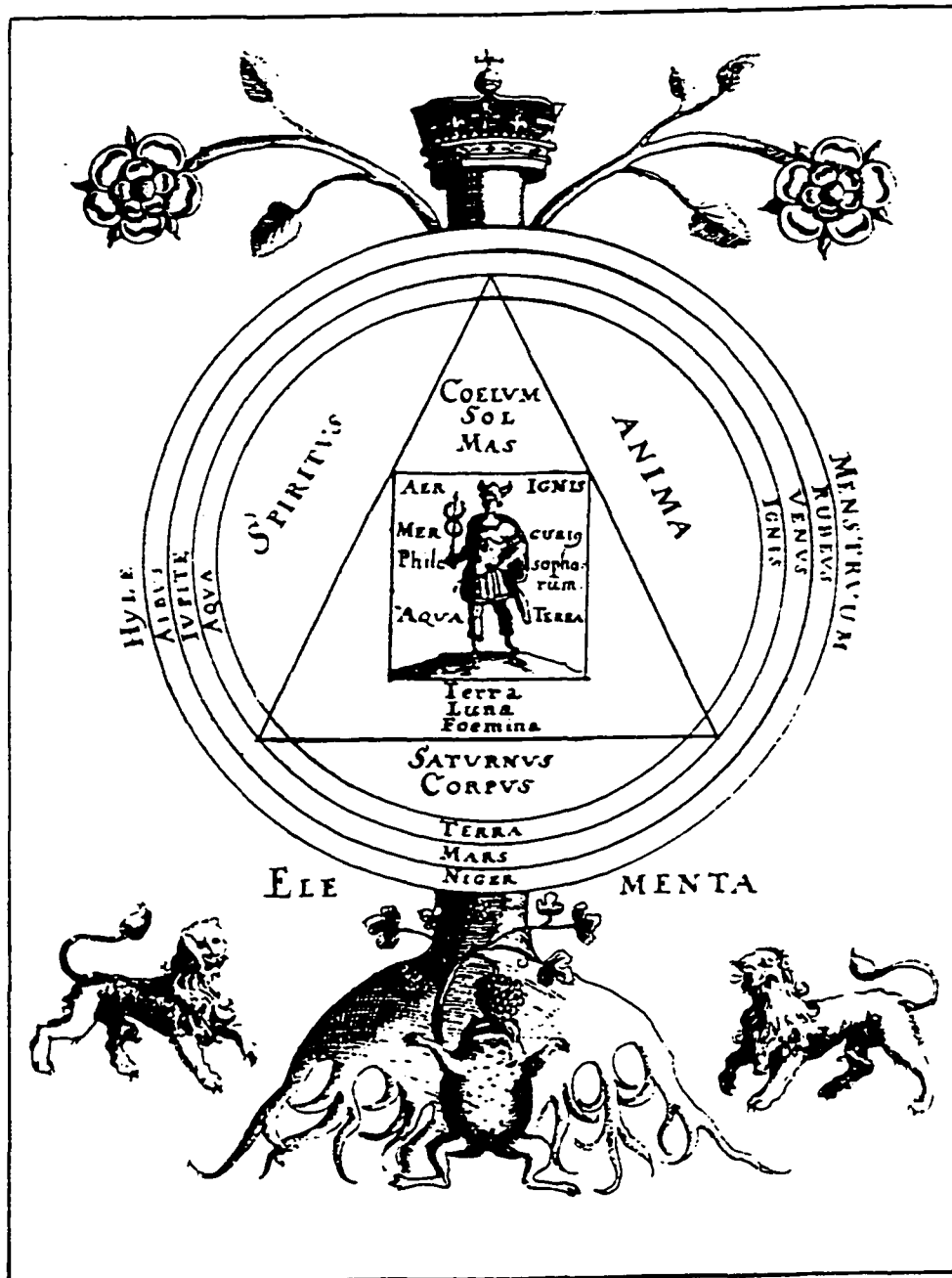
Abriss des Creiffes.



3. Illustration from Agrippa, The Occult Philosophy, vol. 4 (1567; thought to be spurious). This volume was owned by Hegel.



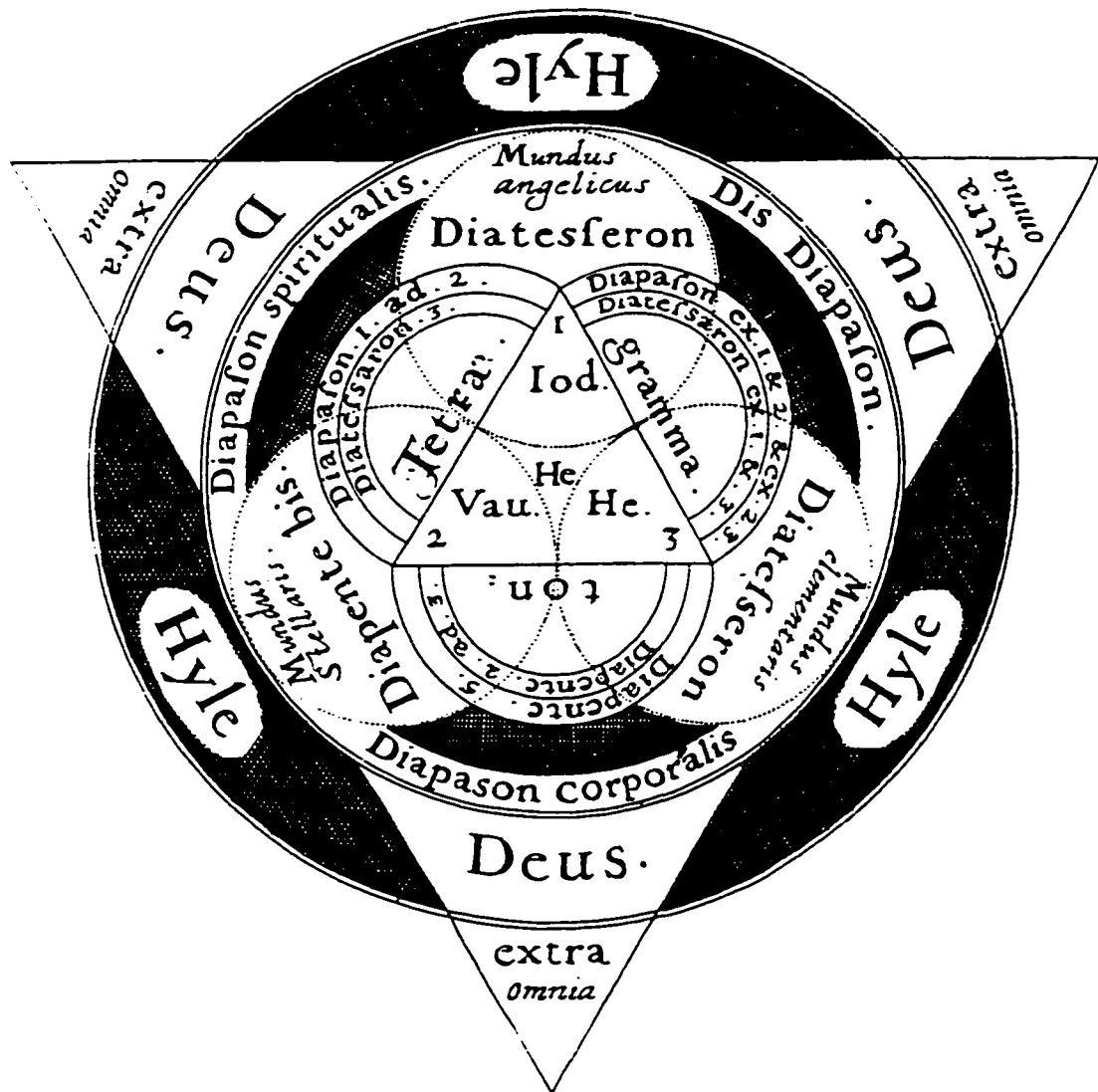
4. First frontispiece of the Aurea Catena Homeri (Anonymous, 1723). This text was known to Goethe.



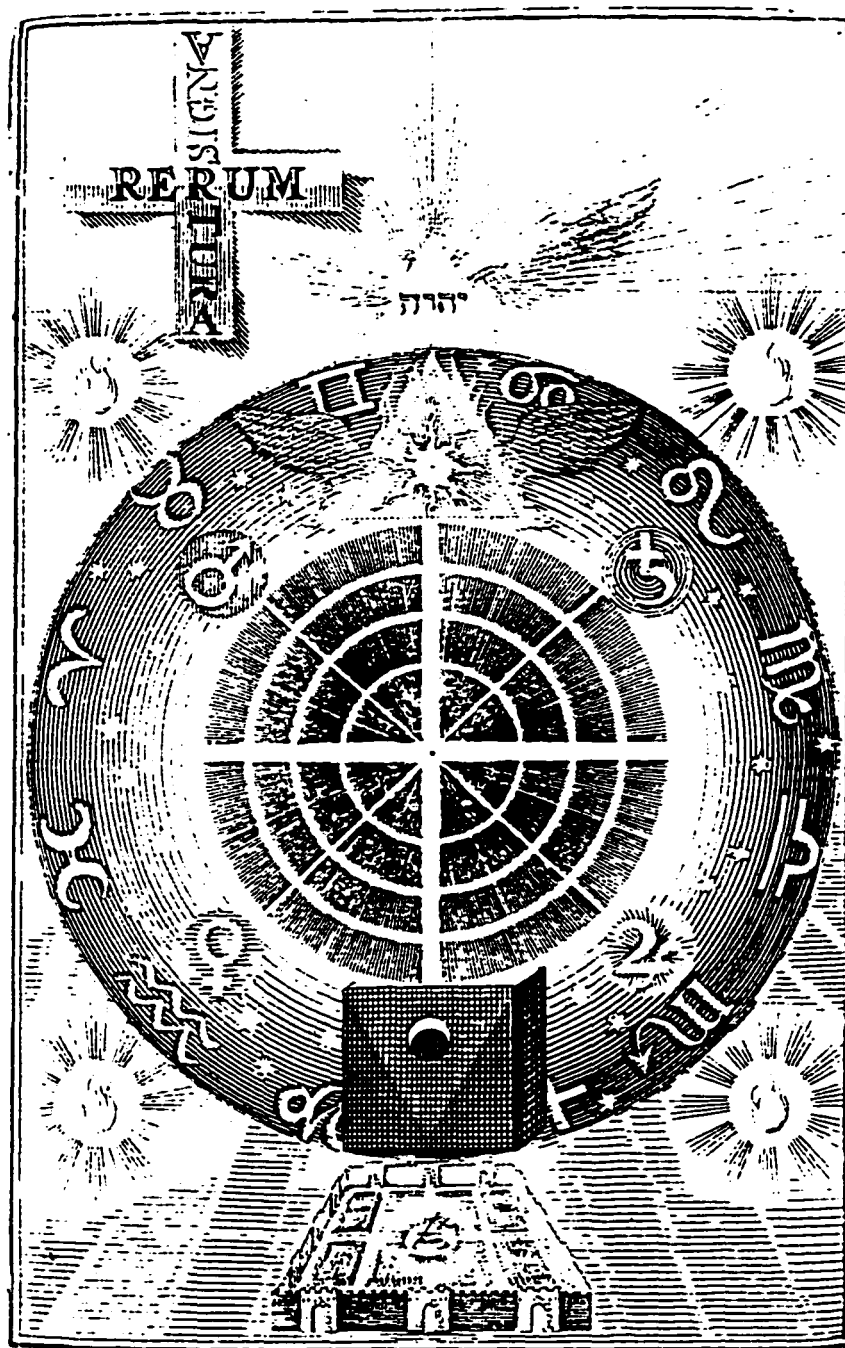
5. Illustration from Samuel Norton, Mercurius redivivus (1630). Note the triangle with the word "Spiritus."



6. Title page of Oswald Croll, Basilica chymica (1609). Note the triangle at bottom with the word "Spiritus" on one side and astronomical symbols.



7. The "light triangle" of God entering the dark hole of matter. The world of nature results. Robert Fludd, Utriusque Cosmi Maioris scilicet et Minoris Metaphysica, Physica Atque Technica Historia, vol. 2 (1619).



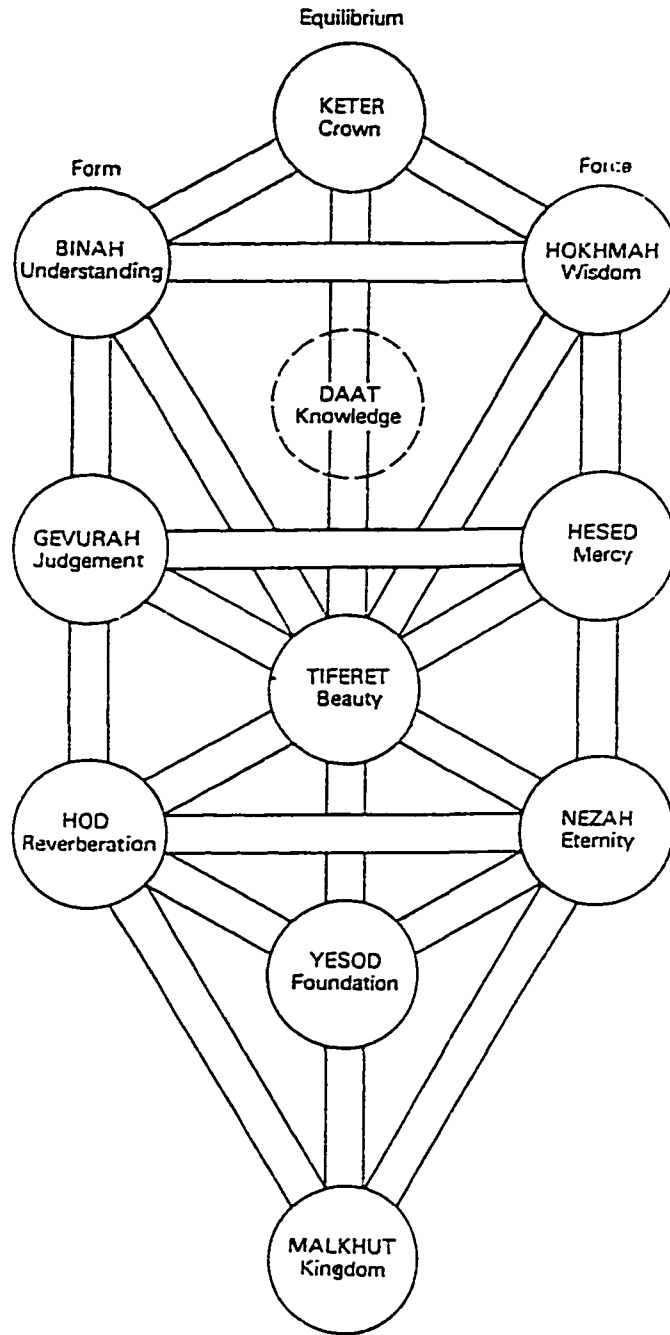
8. Illustration from a 1682 edition of Boehme's Signatura rerum. Note the triangle situated within one side of the cube at bottom (i.e., triangle within square), as well as the astronomical and astrological symbols.



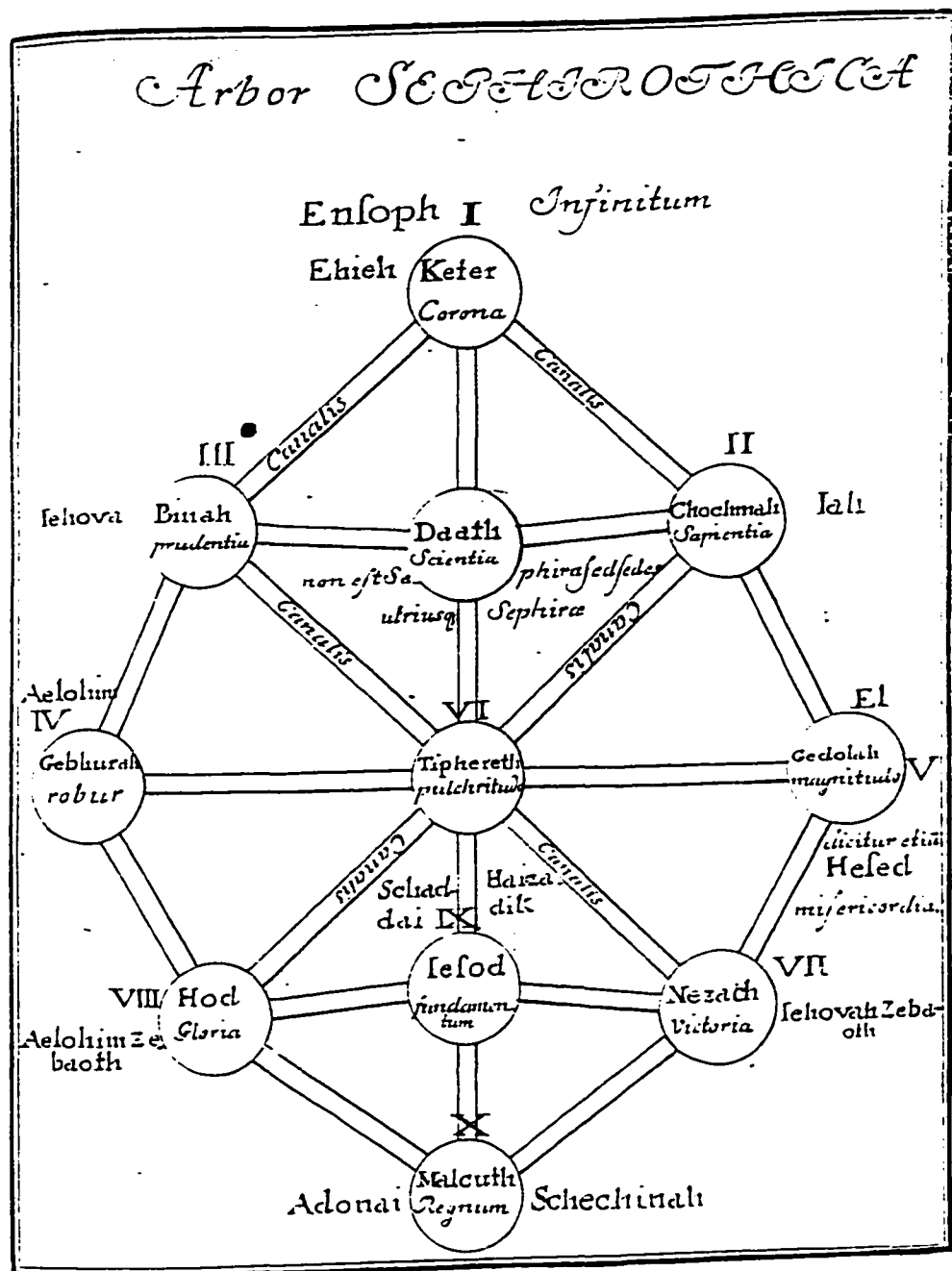
9. The Stuttgart "Gymnasium illustre" (Hegel's alma mater). Frontispiece to Foundation und Ordnung Dess . . . Gymnasii (Stuttgart, 1686). Note the triangular figure in the solar disc at the top of the drawing.



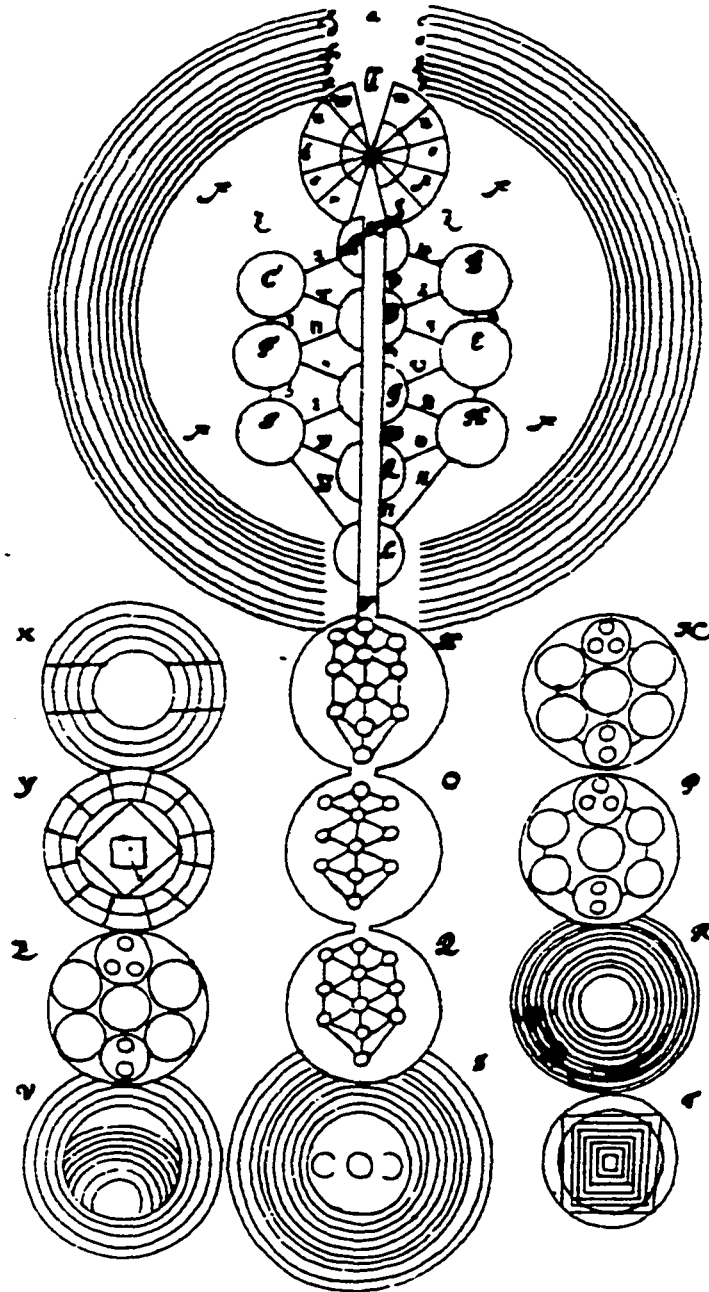
10. "Speculation" graphically depicted. Frontispiece to Johann Joachim Becher, Psychosophia oder Seelen-Weisheit (Lauenberg, 1707).



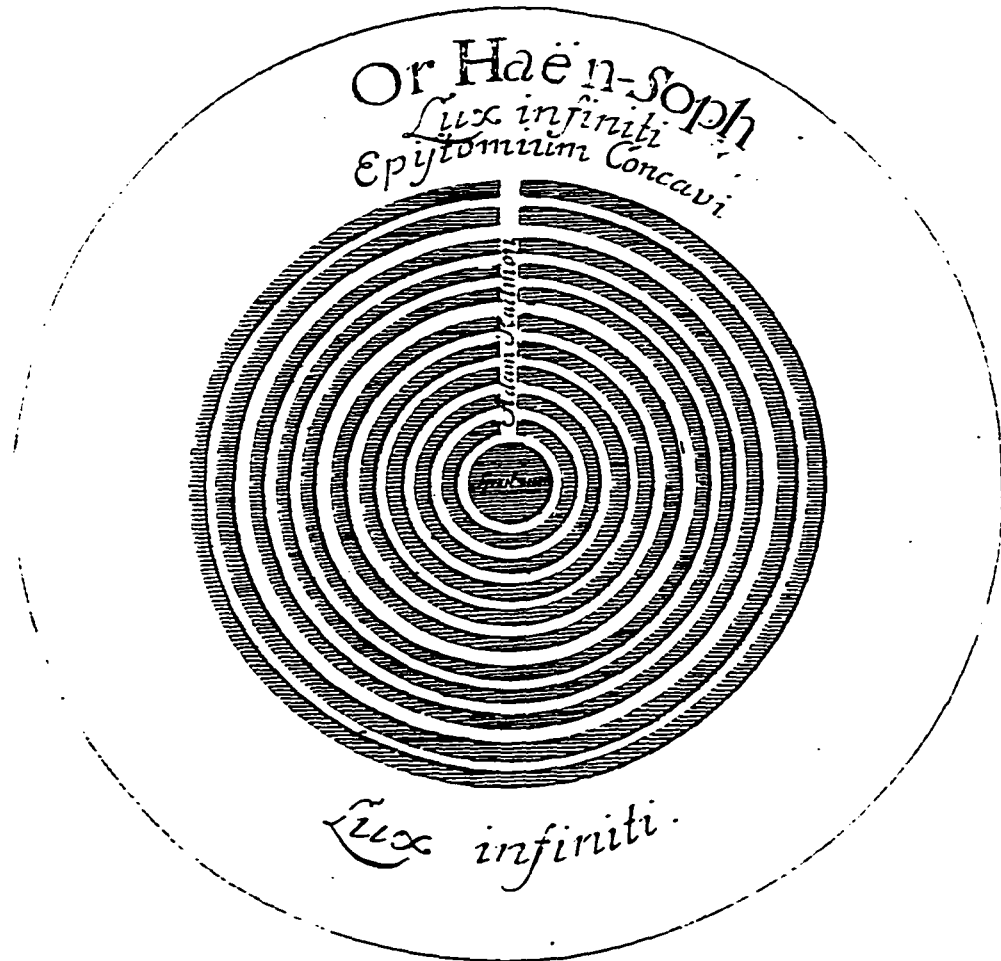
11. The Kabbalistic "Tree of Life," as it is usually depicted. From Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, A Kabbalistic Universe (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1977), 15.



12. The "Tree of Life" as rendered by Brucker, Historia Critica Philosophiae, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1742). We can be virtually certain that Hegel studied this diagram in preparing his remarks on the Kabbalah in the Lectures on the History of Philosophy.



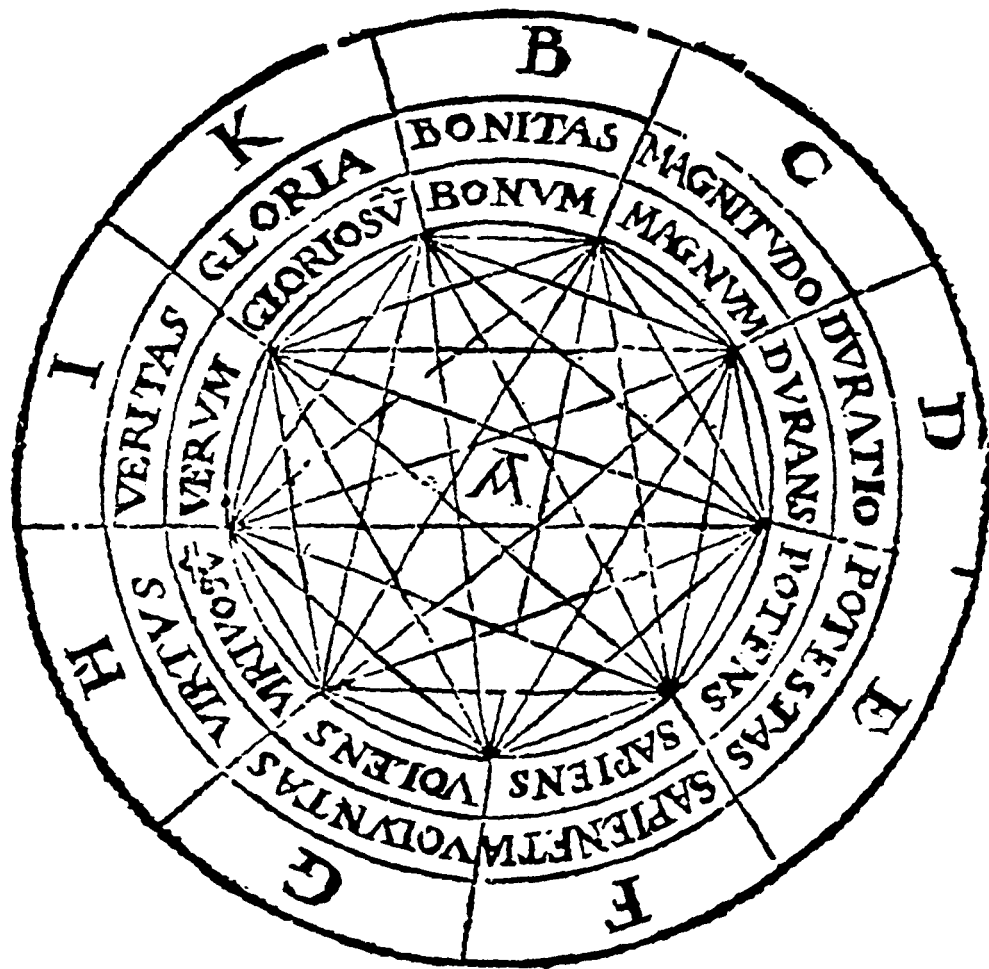
13. Chart of the various structures formed by the Kabbalistic Sephiroth. From Knorr von Rosenroth, Kabbala Denudata (1677-1684).



14. The Lurianic Sephiroth. From Brucker, Historia Critica Philosophiae, vol. 2. We can be virtually certain that Hegel studied this diagram in preparing his remarks on the Kabbalah in the Lectures on the History of Philosophy.



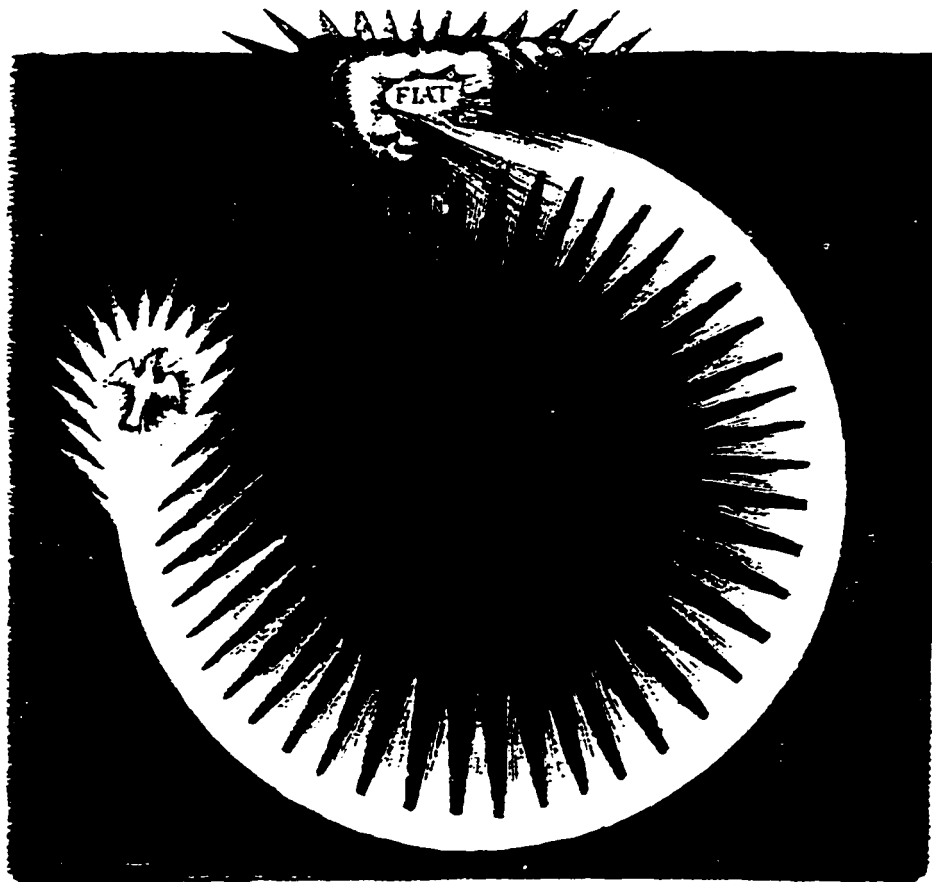
15. Adam Kadmon, as rendered by Brucker, Historia Critica Philosophiae, vol. 2.



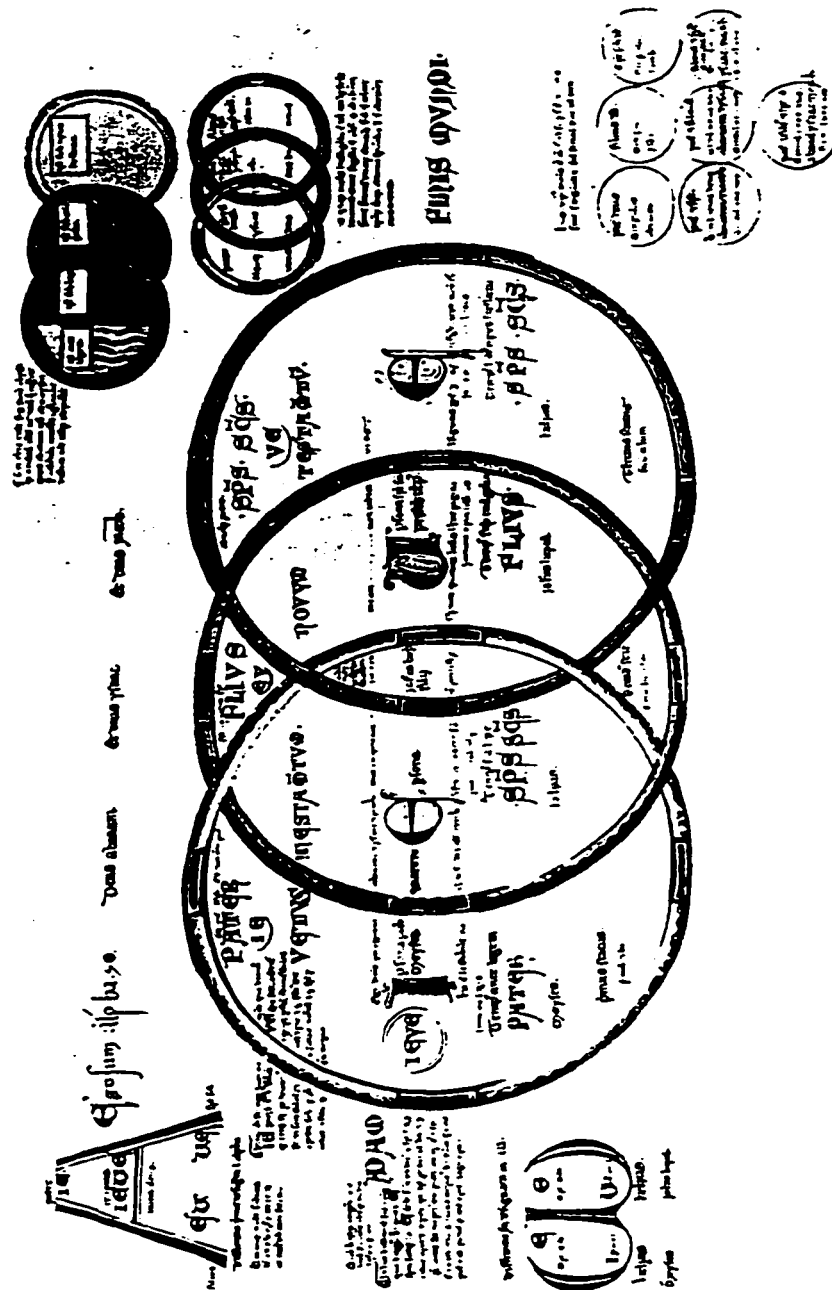
17. The "A" Figure from Lull's Ars Brevis, Opera (Strasburg, 1617).



19. The dove of Spirit freed from nature, represented by the four elements (MS., 18th century).



20. The dove of Spirit returning to God (the Father).
Robert Fludd, Utriusque Cosmi Maioris scilicet et
Minoris Metaphysica, Physica Atque Technica Historia,
vol. 1 (1619).



21. The Three Ages of Joachim de Fiore. From his Book of Figures (12th century).